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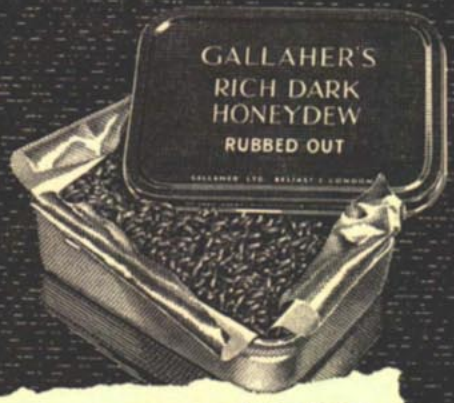

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Encounter

edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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C. A. R. Crosland

On the Left Again

Some Last Words on the Labour Controversy

A DOGGED resistance to change now blankets every segment of our national life. A middle-aged conservatism, parochial and complacent, has settled over the country; and it is hard to find a single sphere in which Britain is pre-eminently in the forefront. Our production and export performance is almost the poorest of any advanced industrial country; and in individual industries one constantly finds that the only dynamic firm is controlled by an American, a Canadian, an Irishman, or a refugee. The Trade Union and Co-operative Movements share with the Labour Party a profound conservatism of outlook. Our Parliament and Civil Service, brilliantly adapted to the needs of a by-gone age, and which we still seek to export unmodified to ex-colonial territories, are in fact in need of drastic modernisation. Oxford and Cambridge are the last Universities in the world to recognise the newer social sciences. Much of our technical education is equally backward.

We cling to every outmoded scrap of national sovereignty, continue to play at the obsolete role of imperial power, and fail to adjust to the new, dynamic Europe; Commonwealth fanatics on the Right and nuclear disarmers on the Left share an equal blindness to our changed position in the world. Our deplorable post-war architecture and city planning demonstrate a failure of nerve in the face of contemporary cultural problems. We are the last country to build a flyover or a motorway; yet our transport system is no more antiquated than our licensing laws, our attitude to homosexuality, British football, or the Labour Party Constitution.

No doubt we still lead the world in certain traditional spheres—merchant banking, classical scholarship, trooping the colour, sailing the Atlantic single-handed. But wherever innovation is required, we see a frightful paralysis of the will. The cause is partly our oppressive, traditional pattern of class relations, partly the psychological difficulty of adapting from great-power to second-rate international status, partly the complacent ignorance bred by an insular tradition. Eventually, one hopes, a rebellious younger generation, aided by much increased intercourse with the outside world, will shatter the present mood. Meanwhile, radical reformers everywhere will meet tenacious opposition from conservative "stand-patters."

THIS CONSERVATISM is particularly marked within the Labour Party, which manifests a colossal resistance to change. In my original ENCOUNTER article I argued that the Party's defeat was due to its failure to recognise and welcome the transformation of our society—not to ill-chance or sudden prosperity or the machinations of Colman, Prentice & Varley. This diagnosis has since been abundantly confirmed, notably by

Over the past year we have been publishing a series of contributions, mostly fairly polemical, addressed to the problem of "The Future of the Left" (with especial reference to the controversies in the British Labour Party). Among the contributors were: R. H. S. Crossman, D. W. Brogan, Arthur Schlesinger, Michael Foot, F. R. Allemann, P. C. Gordon-Walker, Mark Bonham Carter, Daniel Bell, and Mark Abrams. In this concluding article Anthony Crosland (Labour M.P. for Grimsby), whose contribution appeared in the March ENCOUNTER, *closes the discussion on the eve of the Labour Party's crucial Scarborough Conference.*

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the Nuffield study of the General Election and by Dr. Mark Abrams's survey in *Socialist Commentary*. The steady upgrading of the working class, both occupationally and still more in terms of social aspirations, renders Labour's one-class image increasingly inappropriate. Some of the Party's old-style policies are thought (rightly) to be often irrelevant to present-day conditions. And younger voters react especially strongly against both Labour's class image and its identification with the problems and attitudes of a past generation—with the fantastic consequence that the young now see the complacent, sluggish, hidebound Conservatives as the party of change and opportunity!

Evidently the Labour Party must adapt itself to these new realities.[1] This problem has faced every Socialist party in every developed country. Some have faced it successfully, others not. The majority (notably the Dutch, Swedish, German, Austrian, Swiss, and New Zealand parties) have both broadened their appeal and thoroughly overhauled their basic programmes. A minority (notably the French, Japanese, and Australian parties) have clung obstinately either to outworn Marxist dogma (especially ludicrous in France) or to a purely sectional, class appeal. The "revisionist" parties have been markedly more successful in maintaining or improving their position; indeed, the three "fundamentalist" parties mentioned above have all suffered from damaging splits.

Yet the Labour Party shows some signs (to put it mildly) of drifting into the fundamentalist category. No doubt this is partly due to the absence of really effective reforming leadership. A high proportion of the Party's leaders have seen fit, at a moment of historic Party crisis, to maintain a deafening silence on the entire question of the Party's future; while those few leaders who have spoken out for change have (with the notable exception of Mr. Morgan Phillips) not only shown a most imperfect sense of tactics, but have also conducted their campaign in a singularly fitful, unplanned, and dilettante manner—adequate, no doubt, to the country-house politics of pre-1914, but wholly inappropriate in a modern mass party. We may note the contrast with the concerted, systematic campaign for modernisation which the quartet Brandt-Schmid-Erler-Wehner conducted so successfully in the German *S.P.D.*[2]

But the resistance to change of course has deeper causes. Plainly Labour suffers seriously from the national vice of conservatism. But there are also factors internal to the Party itself. The first is a tendency to blame the voters for their new prosperity, and to explain, smugly and self-righteously, that we were defeated because (in the words of Mrs. Barbara Castle) "our ethical reach was beyond the mental grasp of the average person." The second is an ostrich-like reluctance to admit the evidence of what people are thinking; it arises from the extraordinary fear that a party which tries to deal with the real problems of real men and women will become immoral, power-centred, "indistinguishable from the Tories." The third is the conviction of the "millennialists" that Labour need only wait, uncompromising and uncontaminated, for the inevitable capitalist crisis. All three betray a priggish self-satisfaction, a contempt for the judgment of ordinary people and an indifference to their interests, which is wholly alien to the Party's tradition and, in itself, enough to condemn it to opposition and sterility.

First, then, a section of the Left displays a profound aversion to (other people's) high consumption. Condemning the affluent society as "degenerate" and "irresponsible," they bid us not to "come to terms" with it; and so they justify the Party's refusal to adapt itself. Now a strong streak of non-conformist puritanism has always been a healthy feature of the British radical tradition. But while a puritan government of one's own life is admirable, a Pharisaical attitude to the lives of others is revolting. It seems particularly nauseating to-day when for the first time in history entire populations, and not just privileged minorities, have escaped from "the normal condition of mankind"—squalor, hunger, deprivation, and despair.

For myself, I rejoice in this as the most beneficial social development in world history; and I detest the grudging reaction of those who have never themselves known poverty, or what it means to scrabble and scrimp and starve and scheme simply to get the basic decencies of life, never mind the luxuries. An excessive love of money is odious; but money, some discretionary money, is the essential condition, which the mass of people have utterly lacked until very recent times, of privacy, a dignified family life, and

[1] I discussed the practical changes which are needed in my Fabian pamphlet *Can Labour Win?* (May, 1960).

[2] *Cf.* F. R. Allemann's account, "Farewell to Marx," in the March issue of Encounter.

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reasonable hope for the future. Of course there are innumerable things wrong with the affluent society. But why, the moment that the workers acquire the cars, holidays, and gadgets which the critics have been enjoying all their lives, should they be condemned as "fatty" and "degenerate"?

SECONDLY, people fear lest Labour may grow too like the Conservatives. Politics would then become a trivial charade of "ins and outs," played by two barely distinguishable parties, and devoid of any radical challenge to the existing order. In the process, the élan of the Labour rank-and-file, so essential to the winning of elections, would steadily evaporate.

Of course, irrespective of the outcome of the present dialogue on the Left, the parties are less sharply divided than they were before the war. The Right has accepted Keynesian planning, full employment, social security, and even a measure of redistribution; the Left—even Mr. Richard Crossman and his friends—now concedes that limits must be set to state control and ownership. At the same time, economic growth has all but eliminated pre-war poverty, and enabled the workers to enjoy a previously undreamed-of level of consumption; consequently, the working class no longer feels to the same extent "outside" society. Thus, even though political parties still divide on broadly class lines, the economic class struggle which dominated British politics for 150 years is heavily muted. And, lastly, many of the most-discussed problems of the day —for example, the mass media and mass culture—are not capable of purely political solution.

Thus, in Britain as in other developed countries, much of the tension has gone out of politics—indeed, most of the tension which had a broadly "Marxist" explanation. We shall never, thank goodness, recapture the bitter, militant élan of pre-war days—that was a product of Hunger Marches, Distressed Areas, and two million unemployed. But we still want a reasonable level of local political participation. There is little evidence, however, that this depends on adopting "Left-wing" policies. Labour fought the last election on an exceptionally "moderate" programme; yet, by common consent, the enthusiasm of Party workers was greater than at any time since 1945.

Unhappily, as this instance suggests, the élan of the rank-and-file is less and less essential to the winning of elections. With the growing penetration of the mass media, political campaigning has become increasingly centralised; and the traditional local activities, the door-to-door canvassing and the rest, are now largely a ritual. Indeed, the Nuffield study of the last election asserts that "if all constituency electioneering were abandoned, the national outcome would probably be little altered. . . ."

Nevertheless, we obviously need healthy local organisations, for they have many other functions besides electioneering. But the activists who are leaving the Party to-day are going out to the Right, not to the Left—towards the Liberals, not the Communists; and the reason for the drift away is the Party's failure to adapt itself, not its lack of militancy. Indeed, an accent on militancy would leave the Party still more isolated, introverted, and at odds with national opinion—with the fervour of a doctrinaire sect, not of a national party. The Japanese Socialists have conspicuously shown both a fighting élan and steadily shrinking popular support.

AND IT IS ABSURD TO SAY that a "moderate" programme (*e.g.* in terms of nationalisation) would render the Party indistinguishable from the Tories. Consider the sort of policies which a radical, progressive, revisionist Socialist party would stand for:

1. The traditional Labour goal of more generous provision for social welfare.
2. A more equal distribution of wealth, and especially a lightening of the dead hand of inheritance, by means of a capital gains tax and higher legacy duties.
3. A democratic reform of the public schools.
4. A much higher allocation of resources to the public sector—for roads, housing, hospitals, education and the arts.
5. Effective urban and transport planning and the preservation of our rapidly diminishing countryside, by means of more ruthless yet more imaginative regional planning.
6. Protection of the consumer against public and private monopoly, harmful advertising, and restrictive practices from whatever source.
7. An increase in the rate of economic growth, by means of higher capital investment and much-expanded technological education.
8. Libertarian reform of existing laws on capital punishment, police powers, homosexuality, aliens and immigration, etc.
9. An abatement of national sovereignty, in the long run in favour of world government, in the short run in favour of Europe—even at the cost of loosening Commonwealth links.
10. The full acceptance of our obligations under NATO (though not of additional self-imposed obligations like the independent deterrent), com-

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bined with continuous pressure for multilateral disarmament.

11. Racial equality and an effective programme of foreign aid.

With such a programme, there would be little danger of becoming "too like the Tories"! No Tory could accept either its implications for taxation policy, the level of government spending, and the extent of public control, or its challenge to traditional mystiques about the role of the state, the rights of inheritance, the importance of élites, orthodox "morality," national sovereignty, and the British Commonwealth—generally, indeed, to the whole ossified, middle-aged, stagnant, complacent, class-conscious conservatism of British society.

But is the Labour Party ready for a policy at once so radical and so contemporary? The trouble is that some of its leaders are radical but not contemporary—they are discontented, but with a society which no longer exists; while others are contemporary but not radical—they realise the society has changed, but quite enjoy the present one. Yet such a programme should ultimately prove sympathetic to the Party, for it is far more in tune with the British radical-socialist tradition than a Marxist insistence on all-out nationalisation—just as a broadly-based, catholic appeal is more in tune than a sectional class appeal.

What of the electors? Will they vote for change amid prosperity? Certainly not unless they are convinced that Labour will maintain the prosperity; they do not see why they should surrender it in order to enjoy a Left-wing government. But given that conviction, why not? I have consistently argued that once the first entrancement with the world of material plenty has worn off, non-economic issues will come to the forefront. People will turn their minds to questions of education, of leisure, of culture and aesthetics, and the general backcloth and fittings of the society. It is the function of contemporary parties of the Left to nurture and articulate these more imaginative, idealistic aspirations as they gradually emerge from peoples who, for the first time in history, are freed from the bondage of material deprivation.

YET at this very moment Mr. Crossman, having discovered Soviet growth and the threat which it poses to the West, urges us back to a purely economic orientation, with maximum production as the over-riding aim. His argument comes as a godsend to the millennialists in the Party. For, unable to deny the revisionist analysis of present-day society, yet now sceptical of mass unemployment as the inevitable crisis of capitalism, they were at a loss to descry the millennial catastrophe which would shatter the present affluence and sweep Socialism back into power. Now Mr. Crossman has come to the rescue with a ready-made calamity, and the millenialists can sink back with a sigh of relief, satisfied that nothing need be done except to wait.

His thesis is to be found in his ENCOUNTER article [April] and his recent Fabian pamphlet.

> In terms of military power, of industrial development, of technological advance, of mass literacy and, eventually, of mass consumption too, the planned Socialist economy, as exemplified in the Communist States, is proving its capacity to outpace and overtake the wealthy and comfortable Western economies.

This will create "a historic shift in the balance of world power" and "a shrinking of the frontiers of democracy as . . . the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa accept the economic aid and political leadership of the Communists."

> It is possible to predict with a good deal of assurance that, unless and until there is a fundamental change in the structure of our modern managed capitalism, the peaceful competition which has now begun between East and West must result in a series of Communist successes.

The failure of the West is to be traced to a new "inherent contradiction" in capitalism, detected only by Dr. Balogh and Professor Galbraith. "In our Affluent Society, while the individual grows rapidly more comfortable, the community becomes even more rapidly weaker and weaker;" for the system has an "inherent inability" to allocate sufficient resources to national defence, communal welfare and the requirements of future growth. This inability is rooted in the system of private ownership, since the "oligopolists," who depend for their profits on constantly-rising personal consumption, can prevent the government from diverting sufficient resources to other forms of spending.

The contradiction can be resolved only by public ownership. We must "transfer gigantic powers . . . to the central government." Mr. Crossman rejects, it is true, the existing form of nationalisation; and he has no clear proposals for replacing it. But he is in no doubt that a major transfer of ownership, by whatever means, is the central need.

> We can predict with mathematical certainty that, as long as the public sector remains the

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> minority sector throughout the Western world, we are bound to be defeated in every kind of peaceful competition which we undertake with the Russians.

Under these circumstances the Labour Party must play the role of Cassandra. It has no immediate hope of winning power, since Left-wing parties in Britain can win elections only at moments of crisis; and the crisis is not yet upon us. But "when the trend of world development becomes clear and the Communist victories are undeniable, a deep revulsion will set in . . . and anger will replace complacency." Labour must hold itself in reserve for this day, warning the electorate of the troubles which lie ahead, and above all preaching the gospel of more public ownership as "the Communist countries demonstrate with ever-increasing force the efficiency of nationalisation."

READING MR. CROSSMAN'S THESIS, I had a haunting recollection of an exactly similar thesis twenty years ago: James Burnham's prediction of the inevitable triumph of Nazi Germany. With Germany substituted for Russia, whole paragraphs of Mr. Crossman's pamphlet might have come straight out of *The Managerial Revolution*. There is the same cataclysmic view of history—dramatic shifts in power are always occurring, ineluctable choices have to be made, the oligopolists wield gigantic powers, freedom is threatened, democracy is being strangled, a new feudalism is emerging, nations and continents are rising and falling at bewildering speed; the same absolute confidence of prophecy—"we can predict with mathematical certainty"; the same assertion, with an undertone of relish, that the Western democracies are decadent and degenerate; and, above all, the same fascinated, self-abasing obsession with ruthless and absolute power.

But, as George Orwell once pointed out in a perceptive essay on Burnham,

> power-worship blurs political judgment because it leads, almost unavoidably, to the belief that present trends will continue. Whoever is winning at the moment will always seem to be invincible. If the Japanese have conquered S. Asia, they will keep S. Asia for ever; if the Germans have captured Tobruk, they will infallibly capture Cairo; if the Russians are in Berlin, it will not be long before they are in London: and so on. . . . Within the space of five years Burnham foretold the domination of Russia by Germany and of Germany by Russia. In each case he was obeying the same instinct: the instinct to bow down before the conqueror of the moment, to accept the existing trend as irreversible. . . .

The warning is pertinent.

RICHARD CROSSMAN, then, bases the whole future of British Socialism on an economic prediction. The quick answer to this is in his own words, taken from his pamphlet *Socialism and the New Despotism* (1956).

> Socialism cannot and should not be based on any particular economic theory. . . . Those who based the case for Socialism on the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system were departing from the tradition of British Radicalism and introducing a foreign element into the philosophy of our Labour Movement. Labour's real dynamic has always been a moral protest against social injustice, not an intellectual demonstration that capitalism is bound to collapse.

Thus, when Mr. Crossman urges the Labour Party to subordinate all other objectives to winning the economic cold war, his policy is—on his own showing—repugnant to Western Socialist values. Yet in renouncing idealism he has not achieved realism. For his *analysis* is misleading in assuming: that Russian growth is due to the inherent superiority of the Soviet system (false), that effective planning is impossible in a mixed economy (false), that the future of the uncommitted nations will depend on economic factors of growth and aid (dubious), that Russia will conduct an all-out trade-and-aid offensive (dubious), that the West cannot counter this at present rates of growth (false), that British aid will be decisive in the total picture (false), and that Britain will succumb to "creeping crisis" (unexplained).

And his *remedy*—large-scale nationalisation—is also based on misleading assumptions: namely, that growth is primarily a function of the pattern of ownership (false), and that Britain could not achieve more rapid growth except through a larger public sector (false). At this point the argument becomes contradictory, for the existing nationalised industries are (in Mr. Crossman's view) hopelessly unsatisfactory, yet no clear alternative form of nationalisation is proposed, and the few hints dropped about an alternative form are inconsistent with the objective which he sets himself.

LET US NOW EXAMINE the argument in detail. First, are the facts as stated? So far as comparative growth is concerned, the answer is broadly yes. Although the experts differ in their precise estimates, they almost all (with the ex-

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ception of Mr. Colin Clark) put an exceptionally high figure on Soviet growth. The majority view is that the Soviet national income rose during the nineteen-fifties by 7–8 per cent per annum.[3] Over the same period, the U.S. and British national incomes rose respectively by 3·3 per cent and 2·2 per cent per annum.[4]

Moreover, there are some new factors which are highly favourable to Soviet growth. The heavy investment in technical education will yield important dividends, as will the massive developments in Siberia. With a docile labour force, the rapid introduction of automation should prove exceptionally easy. And, as the economy grows more complicated, the Soviet rulers will undoubtedly improve the efficiency of their planning both by borrowing Western techniques and by making greater use of the price-mechanism.

As against this, Soviet growth has so far been sustained by certain once-for-all factors—the relatively low starting-point, the gains from copying Western inventions, the comparative "youth" of Soviet fixed capital, and so on. These influences must all gradually diminish in importance. Moreover, it may be less easy in the future to neglect the needs of the consumer in the interests of maximum investment. Already there has been some relaxation since the Stalin era; the Soviet consumer is now peering across the threshold into the world of mass abundance —perhaps he has even caught, in the distance, the dangerous glitter of "decadent" Western culture. Short of a return to complete Stalinism, social pressures will surely compel a diversion of resources away from industrial investment towards the hitherto neglected sectors of housing, agriculture, and consumers' goods.

The consensus of expert opinion is that the rate of growth of national income may slow down to some 6 per cent per annum.[5] Mr. Crossman expresses alarm "that some Socialist economists should have joined in peddling these complacent illusions." But he nowhere explains why he thinks they are illusions; nor is it clear why Socialist economists should analyse facts and trends differently from any other kind of economist. In any event, the Soviet leaders themselves, in their official plans, provide for some slowing-down.[6] Indeed,

> the central feature of the new trends has been a tendency to re-assess the policy of the maximisation of investment and the rate of economic growth in the context of . . . higher levels of consumption.[7]

Nevertheless, the projected rate of growth remains most formidable. It will not, as the Russians claim, enable them to reach American levels of output during the 1960's; nor is there any prospect that in the foreseeable future they will fulfil Mr. Crossman's prophecy and overtake the West in mass consumption—indeed, if they did, Mr. Crossman's fears would surely be all exorcised inasmuch as the Russians too would then be subject to the enervating pressures of material affluence which (in his view) are now sapping the strength of the West. But there will, without doubt, be a continued relative increase in Soviet economic power.

How large an increase? Here a qualification must be made. If the comparison is with Britain and America, it is indeed depressing; for the Anglo-Saxon economies are most sluggish. But other parts of the non-Communist world have put up a more spirited performance. Western Europe in particular has shown a remarkable dynamism; during the 1950's the rate of growth of national income in Germany was 7·4 per cent per annum (nearly equal to the Soviet rate), in Italy 5·5 per cent, Holland 4·5 per cent, and France 4·3 per cent.[8] Possibly these high rates owe something to delayed recovery from the war and exceptional boom conditions; they may well slow down in the future. Nevertheless, when we concede the Communists a clear economic superiority over the West, we must remember that the Western average is seriously depressed by Britain and America. The disparity between the Soviets and the non-Communist mixed economies of Western Europe is by no means so dramatic.

WHAT are the causes of the Russian superiority? There is no mystery whatever about one cause. In the words of Professor

[3] *Cf.* Alec Nove, *Communist Economic Strategy: Soviet Growth and Capabilities* (National Planning Association, 1959), p. 42. This is an excellent summary of the position by one of the best-known Soviet experts.

[4] *World Economic Survey 1959* (United Nations), p. 23. Industrial production has of course increased faster than total national income in both Russia and the Western countries.

[5] Nove, *Communist Economic Strategy*, p. 44.

[6] For details, *cf.* National Institute *Economic Review* (Nov., 1959), p. 42.

[7] *World Economic Survey 1959*, p. 102.

[8] *World Economic Survey 1959*, Table 1–2, p. 23.

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Leontief, recently invited to Moscow to explain input-output analysis to his former colleagues:

> The fundamental proposition which explains the high rate of Soviet economic development is simple enough. Nearly 200 years ago it had already been clearly stated by Adam Smith.... To expand one's income fast, one must channel as large a part of it as possible—and then more—into productive capital investment. This means that consumption must be restricted; while thus holding down the living standard of the masses, one must at the same time keep them working hard. Marx, in his theory of capitalist accumulation, describes exactly such a process—except that he refers to it in pejorative terms.[9]

If one wants to hold down the living standards of the masses while at the same time keeping them working hard, democracy is of course a great handicap. Just as capitalist accumulation was aided by the non-democratic character of nineteenth-century politics and became more difficult with the advent of universal suffrage, so Soviet accumulation is aided by the absence of effective opposition. The central planners, striving to hold down real wages in the interests of maximum investment, are unencumbered by free trade unions, strikes, wage-claims, a Parliamentary opposition, or free elections; thus placed, they can extract surplus value from the workers on a massive scale.

This element of forced saving was crucial in the early stages of Soviet growth; and it is still significant to-day. Yet Mr. Crossman says that "this is an excuse which no Socialist can accept," for "to concede that dictatorship is intrinsically more efficient than democracy is to admit defeat before the race begins."

This is nonsense. It is self-evident, not that dictatorship is "intrinsically more efficient," but that it can do some things more easily than a democracy; and one such thing is to hold down real wages in the interests of capital accumulation or military strength or imperial grandeur. Dictators have, after all, been doing just this from the Ptolemies onwards; and to admit the fact is not to flout, so far as I know, any recognised canon of Socialist doctrine. But Mr. Crossman no doubt finds it convenient to reject awkward truths as "non-Socialist," and to distinguish between "Socialist" facts and "capitalist" facts. (It reminds one of the Nazi orators who, when addressing the depressed German wheat-farmers, used to shout that "we don't stand for the present price of corn! We don't stand for a higher price of corn! We don't stand for a lower price of corn! We stand for the *Nazi* price of corn!") So the persuasive phrase "un-Socialist" is used either to evoke the disapproval of the faithful or simply to evade unpalatable truths, just as some super-patriot Americans regard it as "un-American" to believe in Soviet technical achievements.

Is the element of forced saving, together with the "once-for-all" factors, the whole explanation of Russian growth? On this, economists differ. Some, observing that other countries in a similar stage of development—notably Japan—have achieved a comparable rate of growth, argue that there is nothing unique, except dictatorship, about the Russian performance; others think there is. But they agree that in such an uncertain field, with so much not properly understood, nothing can be stated with the "mathematical certainty" which Mr. Crossman, a non-economist, apparently feels.

IF THERE IS ANOTHER FACTOR, it is presumably something to do with Soviet "planning." But what is the nature of Soviet planning? "Western economists," writes Professor Leontief, "have often tried to discover the principle of the Soviet technique of planning. They never succeeded, since, up to now, there has been no such thing.... Soviet planning procedures, in practice, do not—or at least did not up to now—differ very much from those that were used during the war" by the British, American, and German production ministries. Indeed, the word "planning" is perhaps a misnomer; we should rather, as Daniel Bell pointed out in the May ENCOUNTER, speak of the mobilisation of resources. The Soviet Government has mobilised and concentrated massive resources on a limited number of key sectors—productive investment, heavy engineering, technological education, missile development, military-scientific research, etc. It is this process of concentration, rather than any detailed overall planning, which contributes to rapid growth and military achievement.

Now such elementary, though forceful, planning (if indeed it is a crucial factor, which is still uncertain) may prove impossible in an under-developed country without large-scale public ownership; for the government's control over the private sector is often weak, and it may be unable to prevent private savings from flowing copiously out towards Monte Carlo. But in an advanced Western economy, with a highly-

[9] Wassily Leontief, "The Decline and Rise of Soviet Economic Science," *Foreign Affairs* (January, 1960).

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developed fiscal system and innumerable methods of government control, it would be perfectly feasible within the framework of a mixed economy—just as Keynesian national income planning has proved to be.

Mr. Crossman of course denies this, on two grounds: first, the "oligopolists" will resist a transfer of resources to higher capital investment because their profits depend on constantly-rising consumer-expenditure, and secondly, their resistance will be successful. Both propositions are incorrect. First, the average rate of profit (as the German "oligopolists" could have told him) need not be lower in a high-investment than a high-consumption economy. Secondly, post-war experience demonstrates conclusively that Governments now have sufficient weapons of control broadly to enforce their will (provided they have one) on private industry; and other mixed economies, with an even larger private sector than our own, have achieved very much higher levels of investment.

Indeed at this point the disciple seems to have drifted apart from his masters. Professor Galbraith has recently reiterated his well-known view that nationalisation has made "no perceptible contribution" to correcting the unbalance between public and private production; while Dr. Balogh, conceding that one possible policy "*could* be the extension of public ownership," nevertheless states firmly that "these problems are not necessarily inherent in the private enterprise system as such. They could be solved without ... changing the character of the system."[10] At any rate, Mr. Crossman *has established no connection of any kind between the rate of growth in Britain and further large-scale nationalisation.*

PERHAPS THIS IS FORTUNATE; for, having argued that nationalisation is crucial, he gives no indication of what *form* it should take. He rejects as "non-Socialist" (again!) the existing type of nationalised Board, but offers nothing in its place—although he has been criticising these Boards for the past ten years. One would have thought that by now he would have adumbrated some alternative proposal. Not so; apparently we still face the task of "finding a new and radical approach" and "working out precise proposals." Thus Mr. Crossman is wholly dissatisfied with the existing nationalised industries; he has no precise idea as to how to improve them; so he concludes that we want to nationalise a lot more industries. No wonder he expects us to be in opposition for a decade.

In fact, if we were to nationalise for reasons of growth and high investment, it is most unlikely that we should adopt Mr. Crossman's "new approach" which—he hints—implies (a) full Parliamentary accountability, (b) more workers' control, (c) less "managerial" authority, and (d) an emphasis on small, local (*e.g.*, municipal) units. With some of these aims, I personally sympathise. But of course the growth-oriented Soviet nationalisation, from which Mr. Crossman argues, has precisely the opposite characteristics—it is large-scale, centralised, highly "managerial" in character, and wholly unaccountable either to workers or Parliament. Now which of these two does Mr. Crossman want? He can hardly expect to be taken seriously when he advocates both at once. His case for nationalisation flatly contradicts his policy for nationalised industries.

WHATEVER the causes of Soviet growth, should the West strain every nerve to emulate it? Soviet steel output will be 110 million tons in 1972—so what?

Mr. Crossman himself, discussing competitive co-existence in *New Fabian Essays*, warned us not to

> fall into the materialist fallacy of assuming that economics provide the prime motive of political action. The dynamic of social revolution in Asia and Africa is not a mass demand for tractors or for bread, but the will and the social conscience of a small intelligentsia.... Mutual aid, therefore, will not necessarily provide an antidote to communist revolutions.

I believe this to be profoundly true. We consistently over-rate the importance of economic factors. In countries which hover on the brink of a Western or Eastern alignment (the Congo, Laos, Iraq, Egypt, Indonesia, Cuba, and even Japan), the decisive influences have usually not been rates of economic growth or aid, but political actions on the part of the metropolitan powers—by Britain at Suez, China in Tibet, South Africa at Sharpeville, Russia in Hungary, or the U.S. over military bases. Recent events in the Congo were potentially far more explosive for the future alignment of central Africa than hundreds of millions of pounds of aid or several percentage points on the rate of growth. (And this is quite apart from the fact that aid programmes so often backfire on the donors.)

[10] "The Economics of World Tension," *Dissent*, Spring, 1960. (My italics.)

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Aid is of course important, both on humanitarian grounds and because in some less developed countries (notably India) the economic issue may be decisive. But we must keep matters in perspective. If military aid is excluded, the economic aid of the Sino-Soviet bloc to the under-developed areas has so far scarcely exceeded the figure of British aid; and it is well below the combined aid given by the Western powers. Similarly, "politically-oriented" Soviet trade (purchases of Egyptian cotton, Icelandic fish, Cuban sugar, etc.) has so far been on a modest scale. The Communist bloc could of course *afford* greatly to increase both aid and trade. Whether it does so will depend on two basic political decisions—whether to give priority to the future growth of the bloc itself or to large-scale economic aid, and whether to abandon the deeply-ingrained Communist tradition of economic autarchy. At present, the accent is still heavily on autarchy; and the bloc appears still to be giving first priority to its own future growth—which may mean a continued shortage of precisely those capital goods which the under-developed areas most want.

However, the bloc will of course continue to exploit the possibilities of aid in any sensitive area (*e.g.* Cuba) where it might have a disproportionate political effect; and we cannot rule out the possibility of an all-out trade-and-aid offensive. In any case the West should, on general grounds, undoubtedly increase its own level of foreign aid. But this in no way requires that we equal the Soviet rate of growth. The West is now devoting only some 1–2 per cent of its total income to foreign aid; and its income is growing at the rate of from 2 per cent to 7 per cent a year (varying in different countries). It could therefore step up this fraction without the slightest difficulty even at present rates of growth. Indeed, both in the U.S., with its sluggish economy and under-employed resources, and Germany, with its excessive accretion of gold reserves, an increase in aid would be positively beneficial to the West itself. Certainly, changes are needed in Western policies towards the under-developed areas—a stabilisation of commodity markets, a reform of the International Monetary Fund, and often a change in the political orientation of aid. But these changes, and a direct increase in aid, are both perfectly possible at existing rates of growth. Indeed, Mr. Crossman's own analysis, with its insistence on the "fatty" affluence of the West, shows how easily, and at what little sacrifice, we could increase our aid; what is mainly lacking is the political will.

But what of the *attractive* power of Communist growth? Some people see the force of example—especially that of China—as a greater threat than the physical level of aid. Unfortunately, if it is, there is little the West can do by way of counter-example; for growth-policies in advanced, mature, Western economies have little relevance, whereas growth-policies in relatively young economies like China have much, to the problems of an under-developed country. From this point of view, the Indian rate of growth is infinitely more important than the British or American rates.

Hitherto, the attractive effect has not been much in evidence. We have now had ten years or more of superior Communist growth; yet the uncommitted nations have not tumbled over themselves into the Communist camp. Since 1950, the Communist threat has receded markedly in Asia and Africa, though not perhaps in Latin America. Provided that India can be assisted from crisis to stable growth, it seems likely that political factors will continue to be more decisive for the alignment of the uncommitted nations than exact comparisons of Communist and Western growth.

In any event, even if Western aid and growth were decisive, the exact rate of British growth would make little difference either to the total of aid or the relative attractions of East and West. To think that it would is to be guilty of parochial self-delusion. There would, therefore, be no point anyway in trying to emulate Soviet growth. Nor is there any sign that our present rate of growth will lead us, as Mr. Crossman asserts, into a state of "creeping crisis"; though as he gives no hint as to its likely causes,[11] one cannot argue with him on this point.

Nevertheless, in common with almost all British Socialists, I should like, for other reasons, to see a higher rate of growth in Britain—to facilitate the additional social spending which all Socialists desire, to ease our nagging problems of inflation and a sickly foreign balance, and to restore some sense of enterprise and dynamism to our economic life. But of course all these aims would be achieved

[11] Except for a footnote prophecy about the terms of trade—a subject on which even professional economists have been notoriously wrong in recent years.

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if we could even approach the typical Western European rate of growth, which is almost double our own. It follows that they could be achieved, not indeed without considerable changes in economic policy (including, no doubt, selected measures of public ownership), but certainly without a vast new programme of nationalisation; for Britain *already* has a larger nationalised sector than any of the more rapidly-growing Western European countries.

Thus Mr. Crossman's latest thesis seems rather flimsy. It does not much matter that it is diametrically opposed to the one which he was urging on the Party only recently. But it does seem rather irresponsible to condemn the British people to another decade of Tory rule on the basis of quite so tenuous an analysis and so uncertain a prediction—to far more, indeed, than the decade which he imagines. For an unreconstructed Labour Party, committed to all-out nationalisation and austerity, would lose votes heavily to the Liberals at the next election; and the swing against the Tories, when it came, would find the British Left divided hopelessly in two.

One last point. I have criticised Mr. Crossman for constantly using the word "Socialist" in a purely exhortatory manner without ever defining it—though since he regularly applies it to the Soviet economy one has uneasy suspicions about his definition. But if one is to bandy the word about, one had better get it right. There is nothing in British Socialist doctrine which would conceivably justify applying the word to Mr. Crossman's policy of giving an absolute priority to maximum economic growth, maximum military strength, and maximum world power. Such a policy would have been equally repugnant, whatever their other differences, to all the Socialist pioneers—to Robert Owen, the Chartists, the Christian Socialists, William Morris, the early Fabians, Keir Hardie and the I.L.P.—not to mention Marx. It would, if consistently pursued, involve a clear sacrifice, in the interests of maximum production, of values which *do* constitute the essence of Western Socialism—of personal freedom, equality of incomes, the rights of the consumer, and the greatest possible diffusion of power.

Let Mr. Crossman, if he wishes, try to force his policy on the Party in the interests of fighting the economic cold war; but let him not describe it as a "Socialist" policy. For, in his own eloquent words in *New Fabian Essays*, "to treat the Soviet Empire as an example of Socialist planning is to make nonsense of every one of our ideals.... The test of communism is the statistical success of each Five Year Plan, and the size and strength of the Russian Empire. The test of socialism is the extent to which it shapes a people's institutions to the moral standards of freedom—even at the cost of a lower standard of living or the surrender of an empire."

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Arthur Koestler

A Stink of Zen

The Lotus and the Robot (II)

IT MAY be useful to begin by drawing certain comparisons between India and Japan —the most traditional and the most "modern" among the great countries of Asia.

Historically common to both are a social structure based on the family with its clan extensions, and the caste-hierarchy with its subdivisions; the domination of male over female, of the aged over the young; the resulting authority of the Father and the Teacher; and some basic aspects of education, designed to promote conformity and to inhibit individuality in thought and action. Common to both is a type of reasoning indifferent to the "laws" of contradiction and excluded middle, to the distinction between subject and object, between the act of perception and the thing perceived; an attitude of equanimity towards life and death, the latter being considered closer to essential Being than the former, and with a blurred boundary between the two; an approach to Reality which is intuitive and *a prioristic* rather than rational and empirical, and relies on fluid analogies rather than on well-defined concepts. Since the West regards the intuitive approach as essentially feminine, the rational approach as masculine, both Eastern cultures appear from our point of view to be dominated by men with a "feminine" logic and sensitivity compared to the down-to-earth, matter-of-fact attitude of the women.

I shall not try to discuss which of these similarities are derived from some common Asiatic mould in the remote past and which may be due to cultural interaction—Buddhism being the most obvious example of the latter. I would like to consider instead some of the differences and contrasts within the common framework.

The caste system in India, within historical times, was rigid; in Japan, relatively fluid. A *samurai* was entitled to cut down without further ado any commoner who annoyed, or supposedly annoyed, him; on the other hand, a commoner could pass into the *samurai* class by adoption and marriage. During the Shogunate, certain rich moneylenders—who, in theory, were only one step higher up in caste than the Eta—collected rent from indebted peasants and thereby acquired the status of landed gentry, though they did not really own the land; and they bought *samurai* status for their sons by getting them married to daughters of *samurai* and simultaneously adopted into the family. The Japanese custom of adopting a son-in-law entails the erasure of his name from his own family register, and its entry on the register of his father-in-law. Originally intended to prevent the

This is the second of two articles by Mr. Koestler based on his recent trip to India and Japan. His study of YOGA UNEXPURGATED *appeared in the August* ENCOUNTER. *The "stink of Zen," as the author notes, "is not a rude expression, but a phrase often used in Zen literature," and he adds: "The respect for 'hard, obstinate facts' which a scientific education imparts does not necessarily imply the denial of a different order of Reality; it does imply, however, the obligation to exhaust all possibilities of a natural explanation of phenomena before acknowledging that they belong to that different order. It could be said, then, that I went on my pilgrimage not so much with an open, as with an equally split mind. What emerged is a mixture of pedantic detail and sweeping generalisations. . . ."*

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extinction of a family's male lineage, it became a method of evading the rigours of the caste system—yet another example of the Japanese genius of combining rigidity in the abstract with elasticity in practice. As a result, when the feudal economy changed into an industrial economy, the feudal aristocracy did not have to face a hostile bourgeoisie, because it had literally "adopted" the bourgeois—either individually, or, in the case of the *Zaibatsu*, as a class; the new finance aristocracy was a kind of adopted son-in-law of the feudal state.

India, where the caste system rigidly survived into the modern age, had to go through a social revolution, disestablishing its Princes and their *Zamindar* retainers; whereas Japan was able to preserve her "Emperor system" and build a quasi-capitalistic state on a quasi-feudal foundation. If we search for an explanation of this difference in development, we are led to a basic contrast between the two countries. In India, intermarriage, and even inter-dining, between different castes was unthinkable because caste was ordained by divine providence and bound up with religion and rite; whereas in Japan, caste was regarded from the secular angle as a matter of rank in the social hierarchy and could be treated in a pragmatic manner.

A similar difference may be traced between the types of authority exercised by the father, the *guru*, and the *sensei*. In India, this authority is of a religious character, in Japan a matter of social obligations and codes of behaviour. The Indian father is *ipso facto* considered a saint; the Japanese father is nothing of the sort, but a creditor to whom a vast amount of *on* is due. The *guru* imparts spiritual *aarshan* by his presence; the *sensei* imparts wisdom, which is accepted equally uncritically, but it is a wisdom of worldly learning. The extended family in India is held together by a mystical bond reflected in the joint household; in Japan, obligations towards the more distant members of the family are limited and graded, and if a poor relative must be taken in under one's roof, he is called a "cold rice relative" because he (or she) is last served, and treated with contempt. In India, social etiquette is vague, and the accent is on affirmations of love and affection, symbolised in the Hindu greeting of joining the palms in a smiling gesture of prayer; in Japan, it is an elaborate and watchful ritual. Exactly the reverse is true with regard to religious observances; in Japan, these are treated so nonchalantly that at the Shinto shrine you clap your hands, or pull a bell-cord, to attract the attention of the gods; in India, it is ceremonialised in a series of ablutions, purifications, recitations. The Indian is careless in his dealings with society, punctilious in his dealings with deity; in Japan, it is the reverse. In India, the beggar has a divine right to alms, and to give means to acquire *darshan*; in Japan, gifts are exchanged and obligations returned in the exact amount of those received. In India, education of the child starts late and remains lax, except in matters of religious and filial observance; in Japan, strict social conditioning starts early, but in all matters not covered by the social code the Japanese child and adult enjoy considerably greater freedom.

The difference between the two cultures is most pronounced in their attitudes to carnality. It goes much deeper than, for instance, the contrast between an English puritan and a French libertine. The puritan is enjoined "to renounce the sinful lusts of the flesh"—but also to accept the Sacrament of marriage which makes "man and wife one flesh;" the Hindu considers marriage as a necessary and passing evil during the second of the four seasons of life, and intercourse as a physical and spiritual impoverishment. The French libertine, from Sade to Genêt, is always a rebel against morality, to which he pays implicit and ambivalent tribute; whereas the Japanese forms of libertinage are not antimoral but amoral, and sex is enjoyed for its own sake—as shown by the division of labour between concubine and wife. In India, masturbation is a sin against body and spirit, leading to neurosis and hypochondria; in Japan it is considered a solitary pastime, almost like smoking. In India, the woman—outside her role as mother—is the temptress who saps the male's strength, reflected in the image of blood-thirsty goddesses; the Japanese woman—again outside her role as mother—is a provider of manifold pleasures, skilled in dance, song, love, and witty conversation. In India, accordingly, she is allowed even less individual personality than the male; in Japan, more than the male, because she is not subject to the same code of honour. The obsessional food faddism and bowel worries of the Indians are of religious origin. The Japanese, too, were vegetarians—though never teetotallers—until the disestablishment of Buddhism; but the zest with which they took to *sukiyaki* and raw fish indicates that they considered the prohibition of meat more as a secular law than

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a mystic commandment. Again in contrast to the Hindu pollution-phobia, the Japanese treat their fields with fresh human manure, which is put to use straight from the chamber-pot or *benjo* sink—Western housewives in Tokyo love to tell horror tales about cabbages, artistically arranged in shop-windows, and with dainty specks of excrement on them.

I LIKE to remember and compare in retrospect some festive meals, traditional style, in India and Japan. In Japan, we would kneel in front of a low marquetry or lacquered table, manipulate with ebony chopsticks a succession of pretty and delicious miniature courses (some of which were prepared on charcoal braziers in front of us), and wash them down with thimblefuls of hot *saḳe* presented like sacrificial cups by kneeling waitresses or geisha. We would be refreshed by hot towels between dishes, and use in the course of the meal up to fifty Lilliputian plates, bowls, cups, saucers, and whatnots per guest. In India, if the meal was really in the traditional style, no plates, glasses, cups, or cutlery were used. We would either squat on the floor—as in Vinoba Bhave's camps—or sit along a table, each with a palm-leaf serving as a plate in front of him, our left arms dangling lifelessly as if they had forgotten their cunning, while with three fingers of the right hand we would mix the rice, vegetables, and curd into a sloppy mush and scoop it into our mouths. After the meal, the guests would each in turn move a few steps away, a servant would pour water from a jug first over his fingers, then into his cupped palm to rinse his mouth and rub his teeth, and lastly to drink a few swallows—hoping, with St. Augustine, for "the day when Thou wilt destroy both the belly and the meat."

Suicide in India is rare—the only cases sanctioned by tradition were widows committing *suttee*, and Yogis entering final *samadhi*; but the whole cycle of life is a detour towards death and liberation from the wheel. In Japan, even suicide is secularised, a matter of social convention, and *hara-ḳiri* is treated as a fine art for connoisseurs. Aesthetic perfectionism is as alien to contemporary India as religious perfectionism to Japan. India is a country of dark, tragic grandeur, and contempt for the frills and vanities of life; the Japanese know thirty-five different ways of wrapping a gift-parcel in paper, and the worst tragedy they know is to lose face. The Indians are plagued by religious anxiety; the Japanese by worry about prestige. Ruth Benedict has suggested an interesting distinction between "guilt cultures" and "shame cultures," which is much to the point:

> A society that inculcates absolute standards of morality and relies on man's developing a conscience is a guilt culture. Shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behaviour, not, as true guilt cultures do, on an internalised conviction of sin. Shame is a reaction to other people's criticism... by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by fantasying to himself that he has been made ridiculous.... In either case it is a potent sanction. But it requires an audience or at least a man's fantasy of an audience. Guilt does not.... Shame has the same place of authority in Japanese ethics that "a clear conscience," "being right with God," and the avoidance of sin have in Western ethics. Logically enough, therefore, a man will not be punished in the afterlife. The Japanese—except for priests who know the Indian *sutras*—are quite unacquainted with the idea of reincarnation dependent upon one's merit in this life, and—except for some well-instructed Christian converts—they do not recognise post-death reward and punishment or a heaven and hell.[1]

Nor do they recognise Good and Evil as absolutes; Japanese ethics is pragmatic, relativistic, and situational. A man is not part good, part bad; he is part "rough soul" and part "gentle soul," both considered equally useful under the proper circumstances. The classical Japanese vocabulary, which had no word for "competition" and "civic rights," had no word for "God" either; to the first Jesuit missionaries "the translation of the word 'God' has caused great difficulties in Japan, where it has been most inadequately represented by the word *Kami*, which means little more than a superior being."[2]

Which leads us to Zen.

"Kill the Buddha"

ZEN is to religion what a "flat garden" is to a garden. It knows no god, no afterlife, no good and no evil, as the rock garden knows no flowers, herbs, or shrubs. It has no doctrine or holy writ, its teaching is transmitted mainly in the form of parables as ambiguous as the pebbles in the rock garden which symbolise now a mountain, now a fleeing tiger. When a disciple

[1] Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (London, 1947).
[2] Sansom, *The Western World and Japan* (New York, 1951).

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asks "What is Zen?," the master's traditional answer is "Three pounds of flax" or "A decaying noodle" or "A toilet stick" or a whack on the pupil's head. Zen cannot be debunked because its method is self-debunking. In its *mondos* and *koans*, Japanese ambiguity reaches its metaphysical peak; it is the ultimate evasion. And for precisely that reason it played a vital part in maintaining the balance of extremes in Japanese life.

Taken at face value and considered in itself, Zen is at best an existentialist hoax, at worst a web of solemn absurdities. But within the framework of Japanese society, this cult of the absurd, of ritual leg-pulls and nose-tweaks, made beautiful sense. It was, and to a limited extent still is, a form of psychotherapy for a self-conscious, shame-ridden society, a technique of undoing the strings which tied it into knots; in a word, Zen was the *tanki* (as the Japanese call their tranquilliser pills) of feudal Japan.

In the supposedly oldest Zen poem, attributed to Seng-Ts'an (6th century A.D.), men are admonished:

Saunter along and stop worrying
If your thoughts are tied you spoil what is genuine....
The wise person does not strive;
The ignorant man ties himself up....
If you work on your mind with your mind,
How can you avoid an immense confusion?...
If you want to get the plain truth,
Be not concerned with right and wrong.
The conflict between right and wrong
Is the sickness of the mind.[3]

From its earliest beginnings—supposedly in 6th-century China—the great masters of Zen denied that it aimed at moral improvement: "If a man seeks the Buddha, that man loses the Buddha." According to tradition, it was the fierce-looking Indian monk, Bodhidharma, who brought Buddhism to China in the 6th century. When the Emperor asked him how much merit he, the Emperor, had acquired by supporting the new creed, Bodhidharma shouted at him: "None whatsoever." The Emperor, rather shaken in his enthusiasm, then wanted to know just what the sacred doctrine of the creed was. Again Bodhidharma shouted, "It is empty, there is nothing sacred."

That interview set the tone for the Zen tradition, which makes a special point of being rude, abrupt, direct, and sarcastic—precisely those things which, according to the Japanese code of manners, must be avoided like the plague. The founding father himself, Bodhidharma, a favourite subject of Zen painting, is invariably portrayed as a snarling tough, with eyes menacingly bulging out of his head yet at the same time twinkling with sarcastic glee. Once he fell asleep while meditating, and got so furious about it that he promptly sawed off his offending eyelids. These dropped to the ground and became the seeds of the first tea-plants—hence the saying that Zen and tea "taste the same." Another leg-pull story has it that the ferocious Bodhidharma persisted in meditation so long that his legs fell off.

The tradition of deliberate rudeness has, significantly, been maintained to this day, and there are endless stories to illustrate it.

> A monk asked Tosu (T'ou-tzu), a Zen master of the T'ang period: "I understand that all sounds are the voice of the Buddha. Is this right?" The master said, "That is right." The monk then proceeded: "Would not the master please stop making a noise which echoes the sound of a fermenting mass of filth?" The master thereupon struck the monk.
>
> The monk further asked Tosu: "Am I in the right when I understand the Buddha as asserting that all talk, however trivial or derogatory, belongs to ultimate truth?" The master said, "Yes, you are in the right." The monk went on, "May I then call you a donkey?" The master thereupon struck him.[4]

The reason why the master struck him was not the monk's rudeness—which was in the right tradition of Zen-teasing—but because he was too logical—which is the one unforgivable sin in a Zen monastery. Dr. Suzuki, the *sensei* of Zen *senseis*, comments with a lucidity which is quite unusual in his voluminous writings:

> The masterful Tosu knew, as all Zen masters do, the uselessness of making any verbal demonstration against such a "logician." For verbalism leads from one complication to another; there is no end to it. The only effective way, perhaps, to make such a monk as this one realise the falsehood of his conceptual understanding is to strike him and so let him experience within himself the meaning of the statement, "One in All and All in One." The monk was to be awakened from his logical somnambulism. Hence Tosu's drastic measure.

A monk asked the master Ts'ui-wei for what reason Bodhidharma had come from India. The master answered: "Pass me that chin-rest." As

[3] Quoted by Alan W. Watts, *The Way of Zen* (London, 1957), pp. 89, 115.
[4] Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (London, 1959), p. 33.

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soon as the monk had passed the chin-rest, the master whacked him over the head with it. That is all there is to the story. A chin-rest is a board to support the head during long meditation; and the moral of the story is evidently: don't try to reason—meditate.

> Po-chang had so many students that he had to open a second monastery. To find a suitable person as its master, he called his monks together and set a pitcher before them, saying:
> "Without calling it a pitcher, tell me what it is."
> The head monk said, "You couldn't call it a piece of wood."
> At this the monastery cook kicked the pitcher over and walked away. The cook was put in charge of the new monastery.

Why was the cook put in charge of the new monastery? As a reward, one might say, for his un-Japanese behaviour. This consisted not only in the rudeness, but above all in the spontaneity and directness of his gesture: in his "direct pointing," as Zen calls it, in contradistinction to verbal reflection. The cook was cutting through the Gordian knot.

The whackings and teasings are a mild form of shock therapy to jolt the student out of his mental habits and to hammer it into his head that he must act spontaneously, without thinking, without self-consciousness and hesitation. This is the main purpose of the *mondo*—the brief, sharp dialogue between master and pupil—and the *koan*—the logically insoluble riddle which the pupil must try to solve. A variant of the pitcher *koan*, for instance, is the bath-water *koan*. The master suddenly springs the question at the pupil: "When you let out the bath-water, does the eddy turn clockwise or anti-clockwise?" The pupil hesitates, and the master yells at him: "Don't think! Act!," whirling his hand in the air. Or, the master may ask: "A girl is walking down the street. Is she the younger or the older sister?" The correct answer is, apparently, for the pupil to put on a mincing walk, that is, to *become* the girl, and thereby to demonstrate that what matters is the experience of being and not its verbal description, the "suchness" of existence and not concepts like "older" or "sister."

> The truth is, [says Dr. Suzuki] as Tosu declares in the following:
> A monk asks, "What is the Buddha?"
> Tosu answers, "The Buddha."
> Monk: "What is the Tao?"
> Tosu: "The Tao."
> Monk: "What is Zen?"
> Tosu: "Zen."

What is a rose? Is a rose, is a rose.

"In fact," Dr. Suzuki informs us, "there is no other way of illumining the monk's mind than affirming that what is is." And what was was, perhaps.

THERE are said to exist some one thousand seven hundred *koans*, divided into various categories. In the Rinzai sect of Zen, the disciple is supposed to pass through a series of about fifty *koans* of increasing difficulty before his graduation as a fully Enlightened One, and the process is supposed to take about thirty years—but this need not be taken by the letter. In the classic system of Hakuin, there are five graded categories of *koan*; but certain Zen abbots, whom I visited in Kyoto, mentioned a different classification: according to his character, the pupil would be given either "keen knife-edge" *koans* or "gentle spring-wind" *koans* or "iron ox" *koans*. A list of "correct" answers has never been published since this would destroy their purpose; but most of the *koans* are of a type which admits of no logically correct answer, only of a symbolic rejoinder in the spirit of Zen.

The oldest-known *koans* are the "Three Barriers of Hung-lun," an 11th-century Zen master:

> *Question:* Everybody has a place of birth. Where is your place of birth?
> *Answer:* Early this morning I ate white rice gruel. Now I'm hungry again.
> *Question:* How is my hand like the Buddha's hand?
> *Answer:* Playing the lute under the moon.
> *Question:* How is my foot like a donkey's foot?
> *Answer:* When the white heron stands in the snow it has a different colour.

The first answer seems to mean that the circumstances of birth and death are mere ripples in the flow of appearances, as unimportant as the eternal cycle of hunger and satiety. The second means, perhaps: do not try to reason, but serenade the moon and you are the Buddha. The third I leave to the reader to meditate upon.

Some of the *koans* and *mondos* have an archetypal ring. When Yao-shan was asked, "What is the Tao?" he pointed upwards to the sky and downwards to the water-jug before him. When pressed for an explanation, he replied, "A cloud in the sky and water in the jug." Other well-known classics are: "What was your basic nature before your parents made you?," and "What is the sound of a single-handed clap?" The last one is perhaps meant to symbolise that

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subject and object have no separate existence, because the act of perception is indivisible like the act of clapping. In other words, the single-hand clapping is as "exceedingly odd" as it seemed to Bishop Berkeley *"that this tree/continues to be/when there's no one about in the quad."* And there is indeed no one about in the Zen monastery's quad to answer: *"the tree/will continue to be/since observed by yours faithfully, God."*

THOUGH submitted with the guilty knowledge that *koans* exist for the express purpose that they should not be logically explained, the logical explanations given above seem to be borne out by the strong emphasis of Zen on the indivisibility of experience, and on the foolishness of all attempts to chop it up into dualistic or abstract categories of thought. The Zen arch-enemy, the thousand-armed hydra which it fights to destroy, is rational thinking—verbal concepts, definitions, the operations of logic, classification by categories. The more extravagant *koans* are designed to reduce these to absurdity, to undermine the pupil's confidence in his powers of conscious reasoning, and thus to clear away the obstacles to *satori*—the sudden flash of intuitive understanding which illuminates the path to Enlightenment. Hence the distrust of words, considered to be the germ carriers of abstract thought:

Those who know do not speak
Those who speak do not know

When you are silent "It" speaks
When you speak "It" is silent.

The philosophy of Zen is traditionally summed up in four sentences, attributed to the Second Patriarch—the pupil of Bodhidharma:

Unteachable and unorthodox—[5]
Not founded on words and letters—
Pointing directly into the human mind—
Seeing into one's nature and attaining Buddhahood.

The last point, by the way, is not stressed in contemporary Zen, because it holds that every man is born a Buddha anyway, though there are "short Buddhas" and "tall Buddhas"—or, to paraphrase Orwell, that all men are Buddha, but some are more Buddha than others. The main emphasis in the quatrain is on the rejection of "words and letters," and on the "direct pointing" at the intuitive faculties. Hence the deliberately absurd answer to the question, "What is the Buddha?:" "Three pounds of flax."

That answer is attributed to T'ung-shan, who lived in the 9th century, and a later authority comments that "none can excel it as regards its irrationality which cuts off all passages to speculation." The three pounds of flax remind one of the *koan* discussed by the mediæval schoolmen: "If God had chosen to be incarnated in the form of an ass or a pumpkin, could a pumpkin work miracles or be crucified?"—and of Erasmus' comment: "They are Folly's servants." There is something of that Erasmian attitude in Zen's contempt for the vanity of all endeavours to approach the Absolute with the yardsticks of logic.

THUS some *koans* do make "sense" by their direct appeal to intuitions beyond verbal thought, while others are meant to destroy the self-imposed restraints and imaginary fetters which prevent the spontaneous exercise of the imaginative powers. Once one has entered into the spirit of the game, the answers to certain types of *koan* become fairly obvious. For instance, if a Zen master suddenly barked at me, "Stop that ship on the distant ocean," I should answer without turning a hair: "Don't worry, I have just dropped an iceberg in front of it"—the idea being that if I am free to imagine a ship, what is there to prevent me from imagining an iceberg? When Tao-Hsin asked his master how to achieve liberation, the master asked back, "Who binds you?" "No one binds me," said Tao-Hsin. "Why then should you seek liberation?" And that was the moment of Tao-Hsin's Enlightenment. In other words, all you need to achieve freedom is to realise that you are free—otherwise you are like the man in the Chinese proverb who was searching for the ox while he was riding on it.

To quote another proverb, the *koans* are "bricks with which to knock open the door." It is the door which leads to the "natural man," imprisoned behind the walls of artificial restraints.

The whole teaching of Zen seems to be directed against the inhibitions and restraints imposed by the Japanese code of behaviour. Against the Spartan self-discipline demanded by the code stands Po-chang's famous definition of

[5] This at least is my interpretation of Alan Watts' interpretation of the four ideograms which constitute the first sentence. Watts' rendering is: "Outside teaching; apart from tradition." *The Way of Zen*, p. 88.

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Zen: "When hungry, eat; when tired, sleep." The traditional dread of unforeseen situations is neutralised by springing surprises and shocks on the disciple and encouraging him to reciprocate in equally eccentric fashion: the *koan* technique is designed to bring out just that side of a person which the social code condemns: "the unexpected man." In the social code, "self-respect" is practically synonymous with cautious and circumspect behaviour, designed to avoid adverse comment; Zen bullies the pupil into throwing caution to the wind, and teaches him to respond spontaneously, "without even the thickness of a hair between impulse and act." Social conditioning leads to numbing self-consciousness and blushing homophobia; Zen aims at the annihilation of "the self-observing self." It proclaims itself to be the philosophy of no-mind (*Wu-hsin*), of no-thought (*Wu-mien*), no-striving (*Wu-wei*), no affectation (*Wu-shih*), and of "going ahead without hesitation." In the words of Yün-men, "When walking, just walk, when sitting, just sit, above all, don't wobble." In the social hierarchy, the father ranks second only to the Emperor in authority; Zen debunks even paternal authority by creating a kind of psychotherapeutic transference situation, where the *roshi*, abbot, poses as a formidable father-figure of "tigerish" appearance, but gradually induces the pupil to combine respect with spontaneity, and to respond to *koan* teasers with saucy counter-gambits. The cramped victim of Japanese education, tangled with *giri*, crushed by his *on*, is given by the founder of the Rinzai sect this kindly advice concerning the path towards self-realisation:

> Clear every obstacle out of your way. If on your way you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha. When you meet your ancestor, kill your ancestor. When you meet your father and mother, kill your father and mother. When you meet your kin, kill your kin. Only thus will you attain deliverance. Only thus will you escape the trammels and become free."[6]

Another Zen command expresses the same idea in a less fierce image: "Let your mind go and become like a ball in a mountain stream."

Satori and Samadhi

ZEN spontaneity became the ideal antidote to the Confucian rigidity of the social order. It was a marriage between extreme opposites, which is so characteristic of Japanese culture. But in this case the partners were destined for each other from childhood, as it were. Both came from China, where Confucianism and Taoism had from ancient times played complementary parts in the nation's life: the former determining law, order, book-learning, and convention, the latter pointing to the intuitive Way —the Tao—towards the inner man and ultimate reality; the cloud in the sky and the water in the jug. Zen owes as much to Taoism as to Buddhism, and perhaps more: it has certainly remained closer to the philosophy of Lao Tse than to any Buddhist sect in other countries.

Zen was introduced into Japan in the 13th century—more than five centuries after Confucianism and earlier forms of Buddhism. It took immediate roots; but it became radically transformed in the process, and the flower was characteristically Japanese. By a feat of mental acrobacy, of which perhaps no other nation would be capable, the gentle, non-violent doctrine of the Buddha became the adopted creed of the murderous *samurai*. A little later it also became the dominant influence in painting, landscape-gardening, flower arrangement, tea ceremony, firefly hunting, and similar nipponeries on the one hand—of swordsmanship, wrestling, Judo, archery, dive-bombing, on the other. How was this possible? The secret is not in the Buddha's smile but in a simple formula applicable to all these diverse activities, the panacea of Zen: trust your intuition, short-circuit reflection, discard caution, act spontaneously. It is amazing what wonders this prescription can achieve, especially in a people tied in knots, conditioned to the reverse set of principles.

To make the formula take effect on the unconscious, non-verbal levels at which it was aimed, verbal admonitions were, of course, not enough. Apart from methods of developing the technical skills appropriate in each branch of activity, a mystic ritual and a special terminology were needed. Key-words in that terminology are *satori*, the sudden flash of insight which brings on Awakening or Enlightenment; the state of *muga*, which occurs when the split between the acting self and the self-observing self disappears, and the act becomes effortless, automatic, entranced—so that the painter or swordsman no longer feels that *he* is wielding the brush or making the thrust, but that a mysterious "It" has taken charge.[7] Lastly, a man who has com-

[6] There are several versions of this famous injunction; the above is Mishima's, The Temple of the Golden Pavilion (New York, 1959), p. 258.

[7] "Muga" is the Japanese rendering of "Wu-mien" —no-thought.

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pleted his training and reached final Enlightenment, will continue to live zestfully and apparently unchanged, but he will *"live as one already dead"*—that is, detached and indifferent to success or failure.

Satori is a wonderfully rubbery concept. There are small *satoris* and big *satoris*. They occur when one solves a *koan*, or in meditation, but also through looking at peach-blossom or watching a pebble hit a bamboo. The *mondos*, in which the disciple who asked a too rational question is whacked on the head, usually end with the line: "at that moment he had his *satori*." Facing two famous Zen abbots in the Daitokuyi Temple in Kyoto, I asked them how long a *satori* lasts. The first answered promptly: "One second." The second added as promptly: "It might go on for days." Dr. Suzuki defines *satori* as follows:

> *Satori* finds a meaning hitherto hidden in our daily concrete particular experiences, such as eating, drinking, or business of all kinds. . . .
>
> *Satori* is emancipation, moral, spiritual, as well as intellectual. When I am in my isness, thoroughly purged of all intellectual sediments, I have my freedom in its primary sense. . . .
>
> When the mind, now abiding in its isness—which, to use Zen verbalism, is not isness—and thus free from intellectual complexities, and moralistic attachments of every description, surveys the world of the senses in all its multiplicities, it discovers in it all sorts of values hitherto hidden from sight.

On another occasion he says:

> This supreme moment in the life of an artist, when expressed in Zen terms, is the experience of *satori*. To experience *satori* is to become conscious of the Unconscious (*mushin*, no-mind), psychologically speaking. Art has always something of the Unconscious about it. . . .

Mr. Christmas Humphreys, Q.C., President of the Buddhist Society in London, who, like most modern exponents of Zen, is a pupil of Dr. Suzuki's, informs us in his book on Zen[8] that he had his first *satori* during a lesson in Judo: "On the night when, without 'thought' or feeling, I leapt to opportunity and in the fraction of time that my opponent was off his balance, threw him directly, clean, utterly;" but his greatest *satori* he had in a Turkish bath —which conjures up the image of Archimedes jumping out of the tub to shout *Eureka*. By modern Zen standards I would be quite justified to claim that I have a *satori* on each of the rare occasions when I manage to write down a sentence which says exactly what I mean.

THUS the phenomena covered by the term *satori* range from the mental click vulgarly described as "the penny has dropped," through flashes of inspiration of a higher (artistic or mystic) order, to that lasting change of character which creates a "living Buddha"—in our language, a well balanced or integrated personality.

The accent is always on insight gained by intuition as opposed to cognition, and on tapping the resources of the unconscious; and *satori* could be simply translated by the word "intuition" which is equally elastic and covers the same range of phenomena. There is not more to it, but also not less. The rest is pseudo-mystical verbiage.

Though Zen derives from Yoga and cultivates the use of Sanskrit terms, it aims in the opposite direction. *Samadhi* is the elimination of the conscious self in the deep sleep of *nirvana*; *satori* is the elimination of the conscious self in the wide-awake activities of intuitive living. The Yogi strives to drown himself in the universal unconscious; the Zen practitioner strives to bring the submerged "It" from the depths to the surface. To make the point quite clear: *literally*, *samadhi* means "deep sleep," *satori* means "awakening." *Mystically*, of course, "deep sleep" means entering into Real Life, whereas the Awakened one "lives like one already dead." But *cynically* speaking, it is less risky and more pleasant to choose the Zen path —to live in *nirvana* rather than be dead in *nirvana*. And, however sincere the Chinese Zen Patriarchs' intentions were when they reversed the direction of Indian Buddhism, the Zen way of the *samurai*, of the modern Flower Masters and gay abbots, seems to be more inspired by that cynical truth—not in their conscious minds, God forbid, but in the intuitive depths of their *such-ness*.

The Hitter and the Hit

LEAVING the mumbo-jumbo aside, the special training techniques in any branch of "applied Zen" show remarkable psychological insight and produce some equally remarkable results. Japanese wrestling, for instance, is fascinating to watch because, though the wrestlers often weigh over three hundred pounds and attain six-and-a-half and even seven feet, which

[8] *Zen Buddhism* (London, 1949).

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by Japanese standards makes them into giants, their movements are quick as lightning, and the contest has something of the eerie quality of a mongoose fighting a snake.

The bout itself lasts usually less than a minute, but the preliminaries take fifteen minutes and used to take up to forty-five. The purpose of these preliminary rituals is for the contestants to limber up, both mentally and physically. They approach each other, sprinkle salt on the ground by way of purification, throw water over their shoulders and perform a curious balancing act on one leg, then turn their backs and go into a kind of brooding meditation, waiting for *muga*. Part of all this may be showmanship, but one recognises the genuine element when, the psychological moment having suddenly arrived, the two inert mountains of flesh leap at each other with lightning speed, as the mongoose leaps at the cobra's throat, as if "It" had taken possession of them; after a few turns and twists of breathtaking nimbleness, which look as if no force was being used at all, one of the mountains crashes on the floor or is thrown clear of the ring.

The main emphasis in "applied" Zen training is on complete indifference towards success and failure. The "It" will only enter into action when straining and striving have ceased and the action becomes "effortless" and automatic. The formula is, of course, quite misleading because the athlete *will* use the last ounce of his strength to win; what the training really aims at is to relieve the *mental* strain, and the resulting cramped style. But in a culture haunted by the fear of failure, the contestant must be hypnotised into the belief that he does not care about the outcome, that he is not competing but performing a mystic ritual. Hence the invariably ritualistic setting, and the mystic language employed in archery or fencing or flower arrangement, by which Western enthusiasts, unacquainted with the psychological background, are so easily taken in. Mr. Christmas Humphreys, who had an Awakening because he had thrown an opponent in Judo, is a rather endearing case. But it is distressing when a book like Dr. Eugen Herrigel's on Zen and Archery,[9] which manages to combine the more ponderous kind of Germanic mysticism with the more obvious kind of Zen hocus-pocus, is taken seriously by the public in the West. Since this is one of the few descriptions of applied Zen training, it deserves a closer look.

It starts with the inevitable Introduction by Professor Suzuki. His very first sentence informs us that the practice of archery in Japan is "not intended for utilitarian purposes only or for purely æsthetic enjoyment" but to bring the mind "into contact with the ultimate reality.... In the case of archery the hitter and the hit are no longer two opposing objects, but are one reality." There we go; now for Herr Herrigel:

> By archery in the traditional sense, which he esteems as an art and honours as a national heritage, the Japanese does not understand as a sport but, strange as this may sound at first, a religious ritual. And consequently, by the "art" of archery he does not mean the ability of the sportsman which can be controlled, more or less, by bodily exercises, but an ability whose origin is to be sought in spiritual exercises and whose aim consists in hitting a spiritual goal, so that fundamentally the marksman aims at himself and may even succeed in hitting himself....
>
> Should one ask, from this standpoint, how the Japanese Masters understand this contest of the archer with himself, and how they describe it, their answer would sound enigmatic in the extreme. For them the contest consists in the archer aiming at himself—and yet not at himself, in hitting himself—and yet not himself, and thus becoming simultaneously the aimer and the aim, the hitter and the hit. Or, to use some expressions which are nearest the heart of the Masters, it is necessary for the archer to become, in spite of himself, an unmoved centre. Then comes the supreme and ultimate miracle: art becomes "artless," shooting becomes not-shooting, a shooting without bow and arrow; the teacher becomes a pupil again, the Master a beginner, the end a beginning, and the beginning perfection.

Dr. Herrigel explains that he had always been attracted by mysticism; when, in the 1920s, he went to Tokyo University to teach philosophy, he tried to penetrate the mysteries of Zen. But he was told that as a European he could only succeed in this through the study of one of the arts of applied Zen. He thereupon undertook a six-year course of instruction in archery under "one of the greatest masters of this art." Towards this Master he soon developed the Eastern *guru*-father complex; the ruder the Master was the more devotedly he loved him. "Believe me," he quotes with approval a fellow-disciple, "the Master knows you and each of his pupils much better than we know ourselves. He reads in the souls of his pupils more than they care to admit."

About the technical side of the instruction we are told almost nothing—the first year was

[9] *Zen in the Art of Archery* (London, third impression, 1959).

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apparently spent in learning to draw the bow "spiritually" and to control one's breathing while doing so—but all the more about the Master's sayings:

> "We master archers say: one shot—one life! What this means, you cannot yet understand. But perhaps another image will help you, which expresses the same experience. We master archers say: with the upper end of the bow the archer pierces the sky, on the lower end, as though attached by a thread, hangs the earth. . . ."
>
> "He who can shoot with the horn of the hare and the hair of the tortoise, and can hit the centre without bow (horn) and arrow (hair), he alone is Master in the highest sense of the word—Master of the artless art. Indeed, he is the artless art itself and thus Master and no-Master in one. At this point archery, considered as the unmoved movement, the undanced dance, passes over into Zen."

THE gist of the Master's teaching, repeated in endless parables and variations, can be put into three words: Don't worry, relax. Translated into Zen jargon, they read: ". . . only by withdrawing from all attachments whatsoever, by becoming utterly egoless: so that the soul, sunk within itself, stands in the plenitude of its nameless origin . . ." etc. However, on a few rare occasions, Dr. Herrigel descends to earth.

> If everything depends on the archer's becoming purposeless and effacing himself in the event, then its outward realisation must occur automatically, in no further need of the controlling or reflecting intelligence.
>
> It is this mastery of form that the Japanese method of instruction seeks to inculcate. Practice, repetition, and repetition of the repeated with ever increasing intensity are its distinctive features for long stretches of the way.

The key-word is "automatically." In the third year, the disciple underwent a spiritual crisis. It had been impressed on him that he should not lose the arrow by a conscious act of will; the shot must fall by itself from the archer "like snow from a bamboo-leaf." This became an *idée fixe* with him, and while on a holiday, he devised a method of cheating: he eased his grip gradually until the pressure of the bow-string loosed the shot as if this had happened spontaneously. When he demonstrated this heretic technique, "the Master stepped up to me without a word, took the bow from my hand, and sat down on a cushion, his back towards me. I knew what that meant, and withdrew." The stern Master then refused to instruct him further, but was mollified by a distinguished Japanese go-between. In the fourth year of his training, Herrigel summoned up his courage to ask the Master: "How can the shot be loosed if 'I' do not do it?"

"'It' shoots," he replied.

More months of agony went by.

> Then one day, after a shot, the Master made a deep bow and broke off the lesson. "Just then 'It' shot!" he cried, as I stared at him bewildered.

It took, however, some time before he learnt to distinguish his own, right "It" shots from his wrong "I" shots. At last—whether in the fourth, or fifth year, is not made clear—he was allowed to shoot at a target. But it was not explained to him how to take aim. Instead, the Master told him:

> If you hit the target with nearly every shot you are nothing more than a trick archer who likes to show off. For the professional who counts his hits, the target is only a miserable piece of paper which he shoots to bits. The "Great Doctrine" holds this to be sheer devilry. It knows nothing of a target which is set up at a definite distance from the archer. It only knows of the goal, which cannot be aimed at technically, and it names this goal, if it names it at all, the Buddha.

So, for the following weeks or months, he went on shooting his arrows without taking aim. By what method he ever learnt to aim we are again not told, but it is clearly hinted that the method employed was telepathy.

> Thus, through deepest concentration, he transferred the spirit of his art to his pupils, and I am not afraid to confirm from my own experience, which I doubted long enough, that the talk of immediate communication is not just a figure of speech but a tangible reality. There was another form of help which the Master communicated to us at that time, and which he likewise spoke of as immediate transference of the spirit. If I had been continually shooting badly, the Master gave a few shots with my bow. The improvement was startling: it was as if the bow let itself be drawn differently, more willingly, more understandingly.

Nevertheless, the pupil kept worrying about the Master's contention that hitting the target had nothing to do with aiming.

> "That is just what I cannot get into my head," I answered. "I think I understand what you mean by the real, inner goal which ought to be hit. But how it happens that the outer goal, the disc of paper, is hit without the archer's taking aim, and that the hits are only outward confirmations of inner events—that correspondence is beyond me."

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"You are under an illusion," said the Master after a while, "if you imagine that even a rough understanding of these dark connections would help you. These are processes which are beyond the reach of understanding.... The archer hits the target without having aimed—more I cannot say."

Then, one night, the Master dispelled Dr. Herrigel's doubts by a demonstration of two masterly shots at a target lit only by the tiny flame of a taper. Finally, in the sixth year of training, the author learnt to "dance the ceremony" prescribed in the Great Doctrine of Archery "down to the minutest gesture," passed a public test, and was awarded a diploma. "The Master brought the proceedings to an end by giving two masterly shots in robes of surpassing magnificence. A few days later my wife, in an open contest, was awarded the master title in the art of flower arrangement."[10]

JUST before this happy ending there is a revealing passage in the book:

"Do you now understand," the Master asked me one day after a particularly good shot, "what I mean by 'It' shoots, 'It hits'?"

"I'm afraid I don't understand anything more at all," I answered, "even the simplest things have got in a muddle. Is it 'I' who draws the bow, or is it the bow that draws me into the state of highest tension? Do 'I' hit the goal, or does the goal hit me? Is 'It' spiritual when seen by the eyes of the body, and corporeal when seen by the eyes of the spirit—or both or neither? Bow, arrow, goal, and ego, all melt into one another so that I can no longer separate them. And even the need to separate has gone. For as soon as I take the bow and shoot everything becomes so clear and straight-forward and so ridiculously simple...."

Precisely. But was that six-years' detour into the metaphysical fog really necessary before shooting an arrow was revealed as the "ridiculously simple" act which it always had been? The answer is, of course, that every skilled performance appears hopelessly complicated until, through training, it becomes automatic and thereby "simple." The training has a technical and a psychological aspect. About the technical side we learn, in a passage which I have quoted, that it consisted of "practice, repetition, and repetition of the repeated with ever increasing intensity." There is nothing new about that method; its aim is to enable the pupil to exercise his skill automatically, even "in his sleep." The psychological side of the training is designed to eliminate self-consciousness; its mystic verbiage and esoteric ceremonial are expected to facilitate this process by their irrational appeal to the unconscious. For a pupil brought up in traditional Japanese ways, this may be—or may have been—the proper antidote to mental cramp. On an occidental, the main effect of it is to befuddle him.

In spite of the "Great Doctrine" and the mumbo-jumbo, the technical achievements of Japanese archery seem to be unimpressive. Dr. Herrigel writes too much in a cloud to bother about technical information; on the one occasion when he does so, we learn that the target of the two unforgettable master-shots was at twenty yards' distance. In American championship tests, which consist of several rounds, the target is placed successively at sixty, eighty, and a hundred yards. But the comparison may be misleading because we do not know what kind of bow the Master used; and I was unable to discover reports of Japanese participation in international contests. On the other hand, we know that Judo, another Zen art on behalf of which extravagant claims were raised, is an excellent means of self-defence against an assailant of superior physique and inferior skill, but not more—as was shown at the Olympic Games of 1928 and 1932, when the Japanese champions were defeated in free-style wrestling by other teams.

IF HERRIGEL'S slim volume on Zen archery contains little information on its proper subject, Suzuki's long treatise on *Zen and Swordsmanship* contains no information whatsoever on swordsmanship. Neither the type of sword used, nor the technique of using it are mentioned; not even the fact that it is wielded with both hands. It is a repetitive and confused farrago of *koans*, *mondos*, poems, and quotations partly on Zen in general, partly on the theme that the *samurai*-swordsman was fearless, indifferent to death, animated by "It" and "no-mind," and really a Gandhian saint, since "to state it more concretely, bad is good, ugly is beautiful, false is true, imperfect is perfect, and also conversely." A few more quotations are indispensable if one wishes to get a clearer idea of Zen as expounded by the undisputed contemporary authority on it.

[10] Frau Dr. Herrigel also wrote a book—duly prefaced by Professor Suzuki—*Zen in the Art of Flower Arrangement* (London, 1958).

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The sword is generally associated with killing, and most of us wonder how it can come into connection with Zen, which is a school of Buddhism teaching the gospel of love and mercy. The fact is that the art of swordsmanship distinguishes between the sword that kills and the sword that gives life. The one that is used by a technician cannot go any further than killing, for he never appeals to the sword unless he intends to kill. The case is altogether different with the one who is compelled to lift the sword. For it is really not he but the sword itself that does the killing. He has no desire to do harm to anybody, but the enemy appears and makes himself a victim. It is as though the sword performs automatically its function of justice, which is the function of mercy. This is the kind of sword that Christ is said to have brought among us. It is not meant just for bringing the peace mawkishly cherished by sentimentalists.... When the sword is expected to play this sort of role in human life, it is no more a weapon of self-defence or an instrument of killing, and the swordsman turns into an artist of the first grade, engaged in producing a work of genuine originality.

Tajima no kami thinks that the seeing must first take place in the mind, and then it is transmitted to the eyes, and finally to the body and limbs.... If it is the physical organ of sight that first perceives the outside world, as our psychologists would tell us, the act that is needed to follow up the first perception will have to go through the anatomical process of transmission as we have it in our medical textbooks. This will, however, be too tortuous a procedure for the swordsman in the thick of combat involving life. He cannot afford such a luxury or refinement. He must act without intellectual jugglery or, as some would call it, tomfoolery. Hence Tajima no kami's most penetrating observation.

Yagyu seems to be speaking psychologically when he makes his sword see what is not visible as well as what is visible—and this simultaneously. For the visible is the invisible and conversely. In terms of logic, "A" is "not-A" and "not-A" is "A." The sword is, as it were, held at the identification point of opposites.

The conviction that "I am the only swordsman who has no peers in the world"... matches the declaration which, according to Mahayana tradition, the Buddha made at his birth: "Heavens above and earth below, I alone am the most honoured one!" This matching of the two declarations is interesting in a double sense: "Ichiun applauds 'infantism' as incarnating the principle of swordsmanship, while it was the infant Buddha who made the bold declaration."

After swordsmanship, a brief remark on teamanship. This is not a Potterism, since Dr. Suzuki calls the master of the tea ceremony a "teaman." About the *satori* of teamanship we learn:

The following is the view on the tea held by Seisetsu (1746–1820), a Japanese Zen master of the late Tokugawa era:

"My Tea is No-tea, which is not No-tea in opposition to Tea. What then is this No-tea? When a man enters into the exquisite realm of No-tea he will realise that No-tea is no other than the Great Way (ta-tao) itself...."

Seisetsu's "No-Tea" is a mysterious variation of the tea. He wants to reach the spirit of the art by the way of negation. This is the logic of *Prajna philosophy, which has sometimes been* adopted by the Zen masters. As long as there is an event designated as "Tea" this will obscure our vision and hinder it from penetrating into "Tea" as it is in itself.

There is one redeeming possibility: that all this drivel is deliberately intended to confuse the reader, since one of the avowed aims of Zen is to perplex and unhinge the rational mind. If this hypothesis were correct, Professor Suzuki's voluminous *œuvre* of at least a million words, specially written for this purpose, would represent a hoax of truly heroic dimensions, and the laugh would be on the Western intellectuals who fell for it. I shall return to this point in a moment.

Decline

IN SPITE of its remarkable achievements, Zen began to develop certain degenerative symptoms at an early stage. They seem to have started at the spiritual core of the movement, the monasteries. When St. Xavier arrived in Japan in 1549—some two hundred years after the beginning of the great Zen vogue—he made friends with a scholarly and enlightened Zen abbot named Ninjitsu.

> Ninjitsu one day took Xavier to the meditation hall of his monastery, where the monks were engaged in their usual exercise of Zazen, which consists of kneeling motionless in concentrated thought upon one subject for the purpose of clearing the mind of all extraneous matters and thus approaching an intuitive grasp of truth. Xavier asked what these men were doing, and Ninjitsu replied: "Some are counting up how much they took from the faithful last month; some are considering where they can get better clothing and treatment for themselves; others are thinking of their recreations and pastimes. In short, none of them is thinking of anything that has any sense whatever."[11]

I was reminded of that passage during a talk with an equally amiable Zen abbot in Kyoto, who, having passed through his final *satori* and graduated as a Buddha "living like one already dead," had just bought himself a television set.

[11] Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, p. 122.

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In Mishima's novel there is another abbot, whom his devoted pupil catches out leaving a cinema, dressed in European clothes, in the company of a geisha. Their attitudes to the vanities of the world seem to be like that of the alcoholic who affirms that he is cured, and that he no longer drinks because he needs it but just for fun.

Although the practice of Zazen—sitting motionless on the wooden platform of the meditation hall—plays a dominant part in monastic routine, Zen and meditation somehow do not seem to fit together. It is the practice of a mystic technique without mystic content; if there is no God, no Moral Law, no doctrine, no teaching, what is there left to meditate about—except repeating a-rose-is-a-rose-is-a-rose, as a means to self-hypnosis? The same doubt was voiced more than a millennium ago by one of the great Masters, Huai-jang, when he found another Master sitting in meditation.

> "Your reverence," asked Huai-jang, "what is the objective of sitting in meditation?"
> "The objective," answered Ma-tsu, "is to become a Buddha."

Thereupon Huai-jang picked up a floor-tile and began to polish it on a rock.

> "What are you doing, master?" asked Ma-tsu.
> "I am polishing it for a mirror," said Huai-jang.
> "How could sitting in meditation make a Buddha?"

Yet the more dubious the object of meditation, the more rigorously it was enforced by disciplinary measures which one might call barbaric, were it not for the Japanese love of Spartan methods. The monitor in the meditation hall carries a massive staff with a sharp end, and if a disciple fidgets or becomes drowsy, he whacks him with a sharp blow across the shoulder blades. Richard Rumbold, an English Zen enthusiast, who spent about five months at the Shokokuji, a monastery in Kyoto, describes some savage beatings-up administered by the head monk and his assistant for trifling disciplinary offences. He also gives glimpses of the atmosphere in the Zendo hall:

> Meditation lasted normally from early evening till ten or eleven at night. But once a month there was a whole week during which we were supposed to meditate more or less continuously with only short breaks for sleep and food. These periods were a nervous ordeal since the *jikijitsu* would urge us to make a special effort to gain *satori*, at the same time using his stick freely; and by the middle of the week the monks had become glassy-eyed with excitement, tension, and fatigue, like soldiers in the thick of battle.[12]

The article is aptly entitled "Catching the Mood of the Universe."

ZAZEN meditation, unlike Yoga, holds out no promise of supernatural rewards. At the risk of being repetitive, I must again mention that while both Yoga and Zazen aim at penetrating beyond the captive mind, the "beyond" means in one case trance-sleep and death, in the other case a more intense awareness of the Now and Here. Thus Yoga is a challenge to existence; Zen, a challenge to conventionality. The Yogi practises physical contortions to make his body acquiesce in its own annihilation; Zen uses the mental contortions of the *koan* to stun reason and force it to abdicate. And just as in Hatha Yoga the *asanas* and *mudras* have become physical substitutes for true meditation, thus in Rinzai Zen the *koans* and *mondos* fill the spiritual vacuum.

The *koans* I have so far quoted were relatively tame—like the Yoga *asanas* for Westerners. Here is a more advanced one, a famous classic known as Father Nansen's kitten. It appears in a 13th-century anthology, the *Mumonkan*, and concerns a famous Zen abbot, Nan Ch'uan (Nansen)—whose monks, while cutting the grass, saw a little kitten suddenly appear in a mountain temple. They caught it, but immediately the two groups inhabiting the East Hall and the West Hall of the monastery began to quarrel about its possession. Father Nan Ch'uan, listening to the dispute, caught the kitten by the scruff of its neck and, putting his sickle against it, told the monks: "If one of you can utter 'a good word' (that is, a spontaneous Zen repartee), this kitten shall be saved; if not, it shall be killed." There was a dead silence, so Father Nan Ch'uan cut the kitten into two and threw it away. Later in the day, the chief disciple, Yoshu, returned to the temple. Father Nan Ch'uan told him what had happened and asked for his opinion. "Yoshu immediately removed his shoes, put them on his head, and left the room. At this Father Nan Ch'uan lamented sorely, saying, 'Oh, if only you had been here to-day the kitten's life would have been saved.' "[13]

My own reaction when I first read this *koan*

[12] ENCOUNTER, January 1959.
[13] Mishima's version, *op. cit.*

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was possibly good Zen, because it had nothing to do with the story itself—it brought back to my mind that in the monasteries unwanted kittens and puppies are put out and left to die of exposure because Buddhism disapproves of killing animals. It is one of the few Zen practices dictated by an ethical commandment.

To return to the *koan*, this is how Mishima's Zen abbot explains its meaning in a solemn lecture to the assembled disciples:

> The reason that Father Nansen had killed the cat was that he had cut away the illusion of self and had eradicated all irrelevant thoughts and fantasies from his mind. Putting his insensibility into practice, he had cut off the kitten's head and had thus cut off all contradiction, opposition, and discord between self and others. This was known as the Murdering Sword, whereas Yoshu's action was called the Life-Giving Sword. By performing an action of such infinite magnanimity as wearing filthy and despised objects like shoes on his head, he had given a practical demonstration of the way of the Bodhisattva.

The only appropriate comment on this is a passage by Mr. Alan Watts, speaking in dead earnest:

> The continued practice of zazen . . . provides the student with a clear, unobstructed mind into which he can toss the *koan* like a pebble into a pool and simply watch to see what his mind does with it. As he concludes each *koan*, the *roshi* usually requires that he present a verse from the Zenrin Kushu which expresses the point of the *koan* just solved. Other books are also used, and the late Sokeian Sasaki, working in the United States, found that an admirable manual for this purpose was "Alice in Wonderland."

Mr. Christmas Humphreys is equally serious in quoting an episode from *Through the Looking Glass*, and declaring: "This immortal passage is the purest of Zen."

This brings me back, for almost the last time, to Professor Suzuki and the question whether he and his disciples are trying to fool the reader or themselves. Since *"Alice"* is now being used as a Zen manual, I may as well confess that I have always been puzzled by Dr. Suzuki's striking spiritual resemblance either to Tweedledum or Tweedledee, whose twin such-nesses are no doubt meant to symbolise the identity of tea and no-tea, arrow and target, author and reader, the deluding and deluded mind.

The "It" and the Knack

THE slow decline of monastic life, the voiding of Zen's spiritual core, was bound to affect the arts which had fallen under its sway. Its original impact on Japanese life has been immensely liberating and stimulating—as witnessed, for instance, by the Sumi-e style of landscape painting, which had grown under Zen influence in China under the Sung dynasty and had followed Zen to Japan; or by the Haiku type of poetry; or in the Zen-inspired schools of pottery. The flourishing of the Zen arts coincided approximately with the European Renaissance, and lasted to the end of the 17th century. It created a style of art, and a style of life of unique flavour, a golden age whose golden fall-out still lingers over the islands.

The gradual degeneration of Zen art seems to have been caused by a curious misconception inherent in Zen psychology. I mean the confusion between two different types of uninhibited "spontaneous" responses: the spontaneous flash of creative originality, and the pseudo-spontaneity in exercising a skill which has become automatic. Both are immediate and unpremeditated, but the former is an improvisation sprung up from the creative depths of the psyche, the latter is a stereotyped reaction, either innate or impressed through learning by rote. In other words, the confusion is between intuitive response and conditioned reflex.

In a culture which rigorously suppresses the manifestation of emotions and regards self-control as the highest of virtues, spontaneity acquires a magic aura, even if it amounts to no more than shouting in pain. Hakuin is revered as the author of the *koan* system in its modern form, but perhaps even more because he shouted in pain on his deathbed. In his youth, he was shocked by the story that an earlier master, Yen-t'ou, screamed when he was killed by a robber; but when Hakuin had his *satori* he saw in a flash that yelling in pain was a triumph of Zen, a spontaneous manifestation of "It." Since Japanese women in labour are not supposed to utter a single moan, Hakuin's *satori* must indeed have been a revelation to him.[14] In this, as in similar Zen stories, it is impossible to say whether the "It" is meant to convey a divine inspiration, or the natural, uninhibited play of

[14] To utter emotional shouts in a sword fight is an even older, specific Zen invention, which became an esoteric cult. The traditional shout is *"Katsu,"* and Dr. Suzuki has explained its meaning:

"*'Katsu!'* is pronounced 'Ho!' in modern Chinese. In Japan when it is actually uttered by the Zen people, it sounds like *'Katz!'* or *'Kwatz!'—tz* like *tz* in German *'Blitz.'* It is primarily a meaningless ejaculation. Since its first use by Baso Doichi . . . it came to be extensively used by the Zen

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physiological reactions: "When walking, walk, when sitting, sit, but above all don't wobble."[15]

ONCE more in a culture where the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er, this would be sound advice—if only it were left at that. The purpose of the *koan* is to make the cramped pupil answer without hesitation and reflection—but at this point the dreadful confusion sets in. Since it would need a genius to produce an intuitively inspired answer to every *koan*, the pupil soon learns instead the *type* of answer that is expected of him—the "pointing" gesture, the absurd *non-sequitur*, the rude leg-pull, etc.—and the *mondo* becomes a game after a stereotyped pattern, another automatic skill. When the second Patriarch whacked the third Patriarch over the head and called the Buddha a noodle, they probably meant to give a new turn to mystic thought, not to create a Punch and Judy routine.

The same basic confusion, the same substitution of a ready-made formula for original intuition bedevilled all forms of applied Zen. The inspired "It" ceded to the mechanical knack. The perfect swordsman, says Dr. Suzuki, "becomes a kind of automaton, so to speak, as far as his own consciousness is concerned." In archery, fencing, wrestling, or Judo, this automatic skill of the no-mind is, of course, infinitely preferable to self-conscious wobblings. But in poetry and painting, dancing or landscape gardening, the substitution leads to lingering death by paralysis.

The *Haiku* is a typical example of what happened to other Zen arts. It is a poem of seventeen syllables in three lines. It was derived from the classic form of Japanese poetry, the *Waka*—a succession of five-syllable and seven-syllable lines without rhyme, rhythm, stress, or metre. The *Waka* could go on without limits, as it presumably did in early folk-poetry; but from the 10th century onward, its most practised form was the *Tanka*—31 syllables in lines of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7. Out of this the *Haiku* developed by chopping off the two last lines, leaving 5, 7, 5 syllables as its unalterable structure. Its form resembles a truncated limerick, but without rhyme or rhythmic pattern; its content is a kind of lyrical epigram—a mood caught in a butterfly net.

With the evening breeze
The water laps against
The heron's legs.

At its best, the *Haiku* is allusive and elusive like the best *koans*—like "the sound of a single hand clapping." It has "It:"

In the dense mist
What is being shouted
Between hill and boat?

The sea darkens;
The voices of the wild ducks
Are faintly white.

You light the fire;
I'll show you something nice,—
A great ball of snow!

But these inspired vignettes of the great *Haiku* masters of the 16th and 17th centuries are few and far between the mechanical turnings-out of a *genre* whose knack is all too easy to learn. The proof is that out of the hundreds of *Haikus* in Mr. Blyth's classic three-volume collection[16] it is always the same half-dozen favourites—by Basho, Buson, or Moritake[17]—that are quoted as samples. Nevertheless the seventeen-syllable *Haiku* and the thirty-one-syllable *Tanka* have remained for the last five hundred years the only forms of popular poetry in Japan. In 1956, the magazine *Haiku Research* estimated that there were at least four million *Haiku* poets practising the art—if that is the proper word for the tireless permutations of crows perching on a branch, frogs leaping into a pond, drops sliding off bamboo-leaves, and autumn leaves rustling in the ditch. Its stereotyped imagery and fixed number of syllables leave no scope for individuality, style, or for critical evaluation. The inquisitive Mr. D. J. Enright once asked some Japanese professors of literature,

> ... how they could tell a good *Haiku* from a bad *Haiku*. "We cannot," replied one of them,

masters. Rinzai distinguishes four kinds of *'Katz!'* (1) Sometimes the *'Katz!'* is like the sword of Vajrarapa (which cuts and puts to death anything dualistic appearing before it); (2) sometimes it is like the lion crouching on the ground; (3) sometimes it is like the sounding pole or a bundle of shading grass; (4) sometimes it serves no purpose whatever.... In Zen, what is most significant among these four *'Katz!'* is the fourth, when the cry ceases to serve any kind of purpose, good or bad, practical or impractical. Someone remarks that Rinzai with all his astuteness omits a fifth *'Katz!'* ..."

[15] Next in importance among Zen slogans after *Wu-mien* (no-mind) is *Wu-shih*—*i.e.*, that "nothing special" is to be gained by it; at the same time *Wu-shih* also means "natural, unaffected."

[16] R. H. Blyth, *Haiku* (Tokyo, 1949, 1950, 1952).

[17] Moritake, 1472–1549; Basho, 1644–94; Buson, 1716–84.

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"the trouble is that we don't know what standards to apply. But perhaps you, from Cambridge...." He smiled politely. Another suggested with a strangled cough, "All *Haiku* are good, perhaps?"

The same degenerative process, due to the same causes, can be seen in the Zen schools of painting, from the truly "spontaneous," powerful work of Seshu—who used not only the brush, but fistfuls of straw dipped in ink to impart to his landscapes their violent motion—through the gradual hardening of the arteries in the Zenga, Haigu, and Calligraphic styles, into mannerism and aridity. To-day, painting is taught much in the same manner as archery and other skilled routines. Dr. Herrigel remarks admiringly: "What is true of archery and swordsmanship also applies to all other arts. Thus, mastery in ink painting is only attained when the hand, exercising perfect control over technique, executes what hovers before the mind's eye at the moment when the mind begins to form it, without there being a hair's breadth between. Painting then becomes spontaneous calligraphy." He then goes on to quote (without saying so) George Duthuit's remark: "He who deliberates and moves his brush intent on making a picture, misses to a still greater extent the art of painting. Draw bamboos for ten years, become a bamboo, then forget all about bamboos when you are drawing."

A surprisingly great number of Japanese have indeed the knack of drawing surprisingly pretty bamboos—and rocks, trees, cranes, and butterflies; the only trouble is that the bamboos and butterflies all look the same. Zen art has declined into producing variations on a few limited themes in a few limited styles—into "spontaneous calligraphy" as the revealing phrase reads. There are still works of greater or lesser distinction being produced, but their subjects are stereotyped and their style petrified.

Zen started as a de-conditioning cure and ended up as a different type of conditioning. The cramp of self-critical watchfulness was relieved by the self-confident ease of exercising an automatic skill. The knack became a comfortable substitute for "It." The autumn leaves still rustle in the ditch, but originality has gone down the drain. The water still laps against the heron's legs, but the muse lies drowned at the bottom of the ancient pond.

Morita Therapy

ZEN influenced every walk of Japanese life, including psychiatry. Freud and Jung have never taken root in Japanese psychotherapy (though they are discussed among literatteurs), but a specifically Japanese treatment, Morita therapy, enjoyed a considerable vogue.[18]

It was founded by Shoma Morita, Professor of Psychiatry at the Jikeikai School of Medicine in Tokyo, who died one year before Freud. His biographer, Professor Shimoda, relates that the idea of the new cure came to Morita while treating a patient, a certain Miss Yatabe, who was suffering from an obsessional neurosis:

> She had been treated at the Sugamo Psychiatric Hospital for a long time, and had left the hospital without being cured. He tried at his home hypnosis, other methods of treatment, and his own method of persuasion, but could not be successful. He told me that sometimes he would lose his temper and come to strike her. To his surprise, however, the patient was cured suddenly by herself.[19]

The therapy was developed by his disciples, among them Genya Usa, who had started as a Zen monk, and Takehisa Kora, who succeeded Morita in his Chair. Professor Kora showed me round his Tokyo clinic. He is a quiet and gentle personality, and his patients were docile as usual, but the treatment itself can hardly be called gentle by Western standards. It is mainly used to treat hypochondria, compulsion neurosis, chronic anxiety, and "homophobia"—all of which Morita summed up by the term *"Shinkeishitsu"* (literally, "nervousness"):

"These patients are said to be extremely punctilious, rigid, fastidious, formal, meticulous, and suffer from excessive doubt. They are so perfectionistic that nothing they do satisfies them as a job well done."[20] We recognise what one might call the "Confucian syndrome," and we are not surprised that its treatment was inspired by Zen.

It consists of four stages, each of them lasting on an average a week or ten days. During the

[18] Several Japanese psychiatrists explained to me that Freud's emphasis on sex and guilt does not apply to Japanese society "because sex is taken for granted," and "guilt" is a concept created by Christianity. (But what about India?)

[19] Quoted in "Morita Therapy—A Psychotherapy in the Way of Zen" by Takehisa Kora and Koji Sato, *Psychologia* (1, 1958), pp. 219–225.

[20] "Japanese Psychiatry and Psychotherapy" by Avrohm Jacobson and Albert N. Berenberg, *The American Journal of Psychiatry* (November, 1952).

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first period, the patient must lie on his mat-bed in a room isolated from any stimulus or distraction. "He is prohibited to read, to write, to talk, to smoke, to sing, to engage in any manual activity"—except eating and going to the toilet. The purpose, roughly speaking, is to let him stew in his juice, to worry himself to a pitch followed by emotional exhaustion. After that, "a feeling of ennui appears and he will be placed in a 'stimuli-starved' state. Desire for work then becomes strong and thereby is created an extroverting mood."

During the second period, the patient is still not allowed to talk or to read, and is still isolated from human contact except with the psychiatrist; but he is allowed some light manual work, and is ordered to write a diary, which he must continue till the end of his treatment. The régime is of monastic rigidity; he must get up, go for walks, clean his room, write his diary, all according to a fixed schedule. The diary is sent in every day to the psychiatrist, who sends it back with his pithy annotations. At a later stage, brief personal exchanges take place with the psychiatrist. Thus, for instance, a patient suffering from "anthropophobia," complains about loss of memory:

> *Patient:* "I don't remember in what way I came to this hospital."
> *Doctor:* "If you don't remember anything you should not remember your anthropophobia."

This is obviously reminiscent of the technique of the *koan* and *mondo*, during the tense, brief interviews with the *roshi*. The purpose of this second stage is "to promote spontaneity of thought in the patient by forcibly restricting his physical activity;" or, as Professor Kora puts it: "To the patients who are almost completely deprived of stimuli from the outer world during their bed-rest and are hungry for stimuli, the outer world has a precious charm. However, as a reaction, they often feel some sort of displeasure. Even in such cases patients are told to experience pleasure as pleasure, displeasure as displeasure, and to continue to pursue work allotted to them."

During the third period, though the patient is still barred from recreational and social activities, he is at last allowed a moderate amount of physical activity, which he has been craving. This creates a state of euphoria. Sample from a patient's diary:

> Began to clean the cage of rabbits. . . . I jumped into it and began to work. It was really interesting to clean it. *Doctor's comment:* This attitude is wonderful.

In the fourth and last period, the patient is allowed to pursue his normal activities, combined with heavy manual labour. The main purpose of this is to give him confidence in his own manual skill. "Neurotics live in their imagination. You are busy handling or managing this or that. The more lively your hands the more active your mind." The patient is not only prevented from brooding, but the heavy manual work is supposed to force him to use his mind in a manner attuned to his mechanical activity—according to the principle of "no-mind." Among Professor Kora's hints for patients are: "to allow the symptoms to remain as they are;" "to accept pleasure and pain as they come as unavoidable;" "to be always occupied with work;" "not to grumble;" "to adjust one's outer appearance and never act like a patient. Adjust your outward self and the inner self will adjust itself."

The therapy lasts from five to ten weeks. After the patient has been discharged, there is no follow-up.

DURING my long conversation with Professor Kora, the word "unconscious" was not mentioned. Dreams, subconscious motivations, the causal origin of the disease do not enter into Morita therapy. Its method is not analytical, and it does not aim at unearthing the roots of the symptoms. They will either disappear, or the patient must accept them as unavoidable, and "adjust his outward self" to the conventional pattern in the expectation that his inner self will follow suit. It is not so much a therapy as a re-conditioning based on behaviouristic principles, with special emphasis on manual skills which are expected to help the patient to acquire an automatic kind of spontaneity.

In other words, Morita therapy is a combination of Behaviourism and Zen, of the Pavlov laboratory and the doctrine of the no-mind. When Jacobson and Berenberg published their criticism of it in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Kora and Sato replied in *Psychologia* by quoting some of the American authors' most damning comments, and dismissing them with the single sentence: "Their conclusion reveals their difficulty to understand the true nature of Morita therapy." It echoed the *sensei*'s innermost conviction that the Japanese can understand the Western mind, but no Westerner can ever understand the Japanese mind. I must, however, add

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in fairness that some of the younger psychiatrists whom I met have clearly outgrown this attitude.

The Perils of Tolerance

RELIGIOUS feeling is deader in Japan, and has been dead for a longer time, than in any of the great existing civilisations.

A poll, carried out under the auspices of UNESCO among students in Kyoto, contained the following question (from the Allport-Gillespie questionnaire):

> Of the following activities, which are the three from which you expect the greatest satisfaction: your career or occupation, your family relationships, your leisure and recreational activities, your participation in activities directed towards national or international betterment, or your religious beliefs and activities?[21]

Only 10 per cent of the male and 14 per cent of the female students mentioned religion at all; and only 1 per cent of the males and 3 per cent of the females gave it first place.

In another survey, carried out by the National Public Opinion Research Institute, people were asked to mention any kind of experience which had made them happy: out of 2,761 subjects questioned, only eleven mentioned religion.

Yet another official enquiry revealed that among the students in a Buddhist seminary, a declared 35 per cent were "without faith in Buddha, 48 per cent without belief in the immortality of the soul."[22] Stoetzel, the author of the UNESCO survey, concludes: "What emerged quite clearly was that, both for the group as a whole and for almost all the individual members of it, religious activities played only the most negligible part.... Indeed, it appears that what we call religious needs, while not absolutely unknown to the Japanese, are an exceptional element in their psychology."

It may be argued that a culture can dispense with doctrinal religion provided it has some glimmer of that "oceanic feeling," that spiritual awareness, which prevents the parching of the soul; and it is claimed that Zen provides just that. Thus, for instance, quoting an old Chinese text, Professor Watts says: "As 'the fish swims in the water but is unmindful of the water, the bird flies in the wind but knows not of the wind,' so the true life of Zen has no need... to drag in religion or spirituality as something over and above life itself." Indeed, "to drag in religion" and engage in argument on metaphysics, is regarded in Zen circles as an abhorrent thing, which the old masters called "to stink of Zen." And after Fa-yung, a St. Francis-like figure, had his *satori*, the birds ceased to offer him flowers because his holiness "no longer stood out like a sore thumb."

Remembering the theological disputes in the history of the Western Churches, and their dire consequences, one may be tempted to agree with this attitude—the more so as Zen keeps reassuring us that even sans theology, the mystical essence is still there—that the fish in the parable which "swims in the water" does possess an oceanic awareness, and is not merely running after smaller fish and away from larger ones. But the boundary between an existential philosophy of Being, and the practical considerations of Being, is a precarious one; and there is always the danger that Po-chung's definition of Zen "when hungry, eat, when tired, sleep" might be taken to mean precisely what it says. We have seen how the growing spiritual void in the Zen centres acted like a suction pump, draining the arts of their inspiration and reducing them to aridity—so that when the impact of the West came, they were already sterile and defenceless. This process was repeated in the field of ethics, with even more serious consequences.

AT THE start of this discussion of Zen, I quoted a few lines attributed to Seng-ts'an, who lived in the 6th century A.D., and was the Third Patriarch—that is, second in succession to the Bodhidharma. They are from his work *Hsin-hsin Ming*, which is regarded as the oldest Zen poem and one of its basic texts:

> *Be not concerned with right and wrong.*
> *The conflict between right and wrong*
> *Is the sickness of the mind.*

Fourteen centuries later, the last Patriarch reaffirms the unbroken continuity of Zen's ethical relativism:

> Zen is... extremely flexible in adapting itself to almost any philosophy and moral doctrine as long as its intuitive teaching is not interfered with. It may be found wedded to anarchism or fascism, communism or democracy, atheism or idealism....

The difference between the two statements is in their historical setting, and in their degrees

[21] Jean Stoetzel, *Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (London and UNESCO, Paris, 1955), p. 167.

[22] J. Roggendorf, S.J., *The Place of Religion in Modern Japan*, Japan Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 1.

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of concreteness. The first comes from a Buddhist-Taoist mystic, who looks with a smiling shrug at the sententious pedantries of Confucian society. The second could come from a philosophically-minded Nazi journalist, or from one of the Zen monks who became suicide pilots.

I have stressed the point, and must stress it again in concluding, that the vivifying influence of Zen, its historical and spiritual *raison d'être*, came from its function as a complement and antidote to Confucianism. The division of labour between the rigid and demanding social code of the latter, and the relaxing, amoral spontaneity of Zen, goes back to the origins of Confucianism and Taoism in China. It continued when Zen arrived in Japan, because its teachers knew that it could only flourish within the habitual partnership; and as soon as it became firmly established, the "Five Mountains," the five oldest Zen monasteries in Kyoto, began to propagate not only Buddhism, but at the same time the Confucian doctrine. The monks at the Five Mountains edited and printed the Confucian texts, and were the chief source of their dissemination; paradoxical as it may seem, the neo-Confucian revival under the Tokugawas, which added philosophical depth to the old social code, was chiefly due to Zen influence. The great Zen masters were, after all, sages with a shrewd knowledge of character; they knew that the cosmic nihilism of their doctrine was like arsenic—in small doses a stimulant, in large doses poison. Their wisdom found an unexpected confirmation several centuries later, when Zen was exported overseas and let loose among intellectuals with a decidedly non-Confucian background. They tried hard to obey its command: "let your mind go and become like a ball in a mountain stream;" the result was a punctured tennis-ball surrounded by garbage, bouncing down the current from a burst water main.

To revert to the old *koan*: Zen in itself, without its historic counterpart, is like the sound of one hand clapping. Whether a religion, or a philosophy, deserves that name if it represents only one hand clapping, is a problem for historians and semanticists. Perhaps the *credos* based on the materialism of the 19th century, or on the catechism of the Council of Trent issued in 1566, could be called equally one-handed. But the fact remains that Zen philosophy and Zen art had been declining for a century or more when the old social system, and with it the backbone of the Confucian code, was destroyed by the Meiji reform a hundred years ago. State Shinto was created to fill the religious vacuum; and when that synthetic Baal, too, collapsed after the lost war, neither Zen, nor the older forms of Buddhism[23] were able to offer an alternative to provide guidance in the chaos of values. They were unable, and even unwilling to do so, because of the ethical relativism of their tradition, their denial of a universal moral law, and a misguided tolerance, which had become indistinguishable from passive complicity.

The contemporary Zen abbots in one of the ancient Five Mountains in Kyoto, with whom we had several discussions, confirmed this impression.[24] They were emphatic in their denials that religion had any bearing on social ethics. When we asked them whether they were indifferent to the persecution of religion in totalitarian countries, one of them answered:

> A horse eats in Tokyo and a horse in Osaka is no longer hungry. A Sputnik goes up in Moscow and the shares fall in New York."

That was in the classic *koan* tradition, and it got us nowhere. When we asked a question, they answered with a parable; when I countered with a parable, they begged the question. The parable I submitted was Camus' *La Chute*: the problem of guilt by omission, of complacency towards evil—Camus' Phariseean hero ignored the cry of a drowning woman, and was subsequently destroyed by guilt. After a few meaningless exchanges, one of the abbots said: "Guilt is a Christian idea. Zen has no home. It is glad for converts, but does not seek to make proselytes." At least this was the version given to us by one of our lamentable translators; but it fitted the general trend of the discussion. The abbots were delightful, but after two days of talking, we felt discouraged and dejected. The one significant remark we got out of them was: "When you ask these logical questions, we feel embarrassed."

At another discussion, arranged as a round-table talk at International House in Tokyo, I

[23] I have not discussed the other Buddhist sects of Japan—Tendai, Shingon, Jodo, Nichiren, etc., because, though numerically they were, and still are, stronger, they cannot compare with Zen influence on the philosophy and art of Japan.

[24] The "we" refers to my friend Quentin Crewe (*A Curse of Blossom*, London, 1960) and Hugh Dunphy, a young man who lived for several months in a Zen temple in Kyoto. The three of us, and Quentin's wife Martha, travelled together through Kyushu.

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had an opportunity to meet Professor N., one of the greatest Japanese experts on Buddhism, who holds the Chair for Comparative Religion at an old university. I asked him whether he thought it possible to have a system of ethics divorced from any transcendental belief. He bristled at the word "transcendental," which, he said, meant nothing to him. One of the participants argued that Buddhism too held certain transcendental beliefs. Professor N. denied this, and mentioned as an example to the contrary that Japanese Buddhism rejected the idea of transmigration.

"Then what happened after death?" he was asked.

"Death," he answered, "is for us, unlike for you, not the 'end' of life, but its culmination, its highest fulfilment, as shown by the value we set on suicide."

What happened past that culminating point? Is there an afterlife?

"Yes, some form of continuity, though not a personal one."

But, we argued, that continuity, in whatever form, *does* transcend the natural realm, so Buddhism *does* have a transcendental aspect?

"We certainly do not believe in anything supernatural," answered N.

Somebody tried a different angle. Buddhism lays great stress on truth. Why should a man tell the truth when it may be to his advantage to lie?"

"Because it is simpler."

Somebody else tried another tack. "You favour tolerance towards all religions and all political systems. What about Hitler's gas chambers?"

"That was very silly of him."[25]

"Just silly, not evil?"

"Evil is a Christian concept. Good and evil exist only on a relative scale."

"Should not then tolerance, too, be applied on a relative scale? Should it include those who deny tolerance?"

"That is thinking in opposite categories, which is alien to our thought."

And so it went on, round after dreary round.

This impartial tolerance towards the killer and the killed, a tolerance devoid of charity, makes one sceptical regarding the contribution which Zen Buddhism has to offer to the moral recovery of Japan—or any other country. Once a balm for self-inflicted bruises, it has become a kind of moral nerve-gas—colourless and without smell, but scented by all the pretty incense sticks which burn under the smiling Buddha statues. For a week or so I bargained with a Kyoto antique dealer for a small bronze Buddha of the Kamakura period; but when he came down to a price which I was able to afford, I backed out. I realised with a shock that the Buddha smile had gone dead on me. It was no longer mysterious, but empty.

ALTHOUGH Zen is an important chapter in Japanese history, it is only one aspect of Japan. When the fog of depression lifted, I was again filled with a shamefaced admiration for the courage, the miraculous powers of recovery, and the charm of this nation of Spartan hedonists whose mentality, for all their Western ways, is so alien to us. But it is precisely this marriage between opposite extremes—the Lotus and the Robot, Confucius and Zen, rigid perfectionism and elastic ambiguity—which has such a profound fascination. Unable to achieve a synthesis, they rejected compromise, and settled for the juxtaposition of extremes—the Spartan and the Sybarite sharing the same bed. Instead of the Middle Way, they chose the tight-rope, balancing a bamboo-pole excessively weighted at both ends. The reason why I called my admiration shame-faced is that, though I cannot approve of this solution, it has a profound appeal to me. And, though my Japanese friends will probably resent the directness of some of my remarks, if I were exiled from Europe, Japan would be the country where I would like to live in preference to any other—although, or because, I know that I would always remain there a bug-eyed traveller from Mars among the slit-eyed citizens of Saturn.

[25] The Professor had spent several years in Anglo-Saxon countries and spoke exceptionally good English.

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William Sansom

A Mixed Bag

"I TELL you I've lost it!"

"You'll find it."

"No, no—I must have torn it up with the envelope. A cheque's a cheque."

"Look in the paper-basket."

"It's been emptied."

"Then look in the—oh no, not again!"

"Please darling—just this once."

Down in the dustbin with his red rubber gloves, Beale read A. Beale, Esq. on an envelope and grunted "not that one" and then went on muttering "just this once" for it was the fourth time he had been forced to go through the dustbins that year, which was in its fifth month.

Each time, when he had almost finished sifting a whole binful of rubbish, his wife had hollered from upstairs, in her loudest banister voice, rising and falling like some awful first mate on a frigate's poop, that she had found it. "Prize abeam, Mister Beale, stow your bins below there!" she might have been calling.

It was like a routine.

Yet, once his hands were in his bin and at work, it was not a routine that Beale altogether disenjoyed. Certainly, the first stages were irritating. The change-over from being clean to dirty: and all the bothersome preparations—clanging off the old lid with its empty, tomcat ring; lifting the big old bin right inside to the basement lobby under a good light; laying newspaper out and getting an empty crate to take the siftings; drawing on the surgical red strangler's gloves to take the plunge.

But after the plunge, it was different. A moment of conventional disgust at the idea of so much filth. But after all, whose filth was it? It was Beale filth. It was the personal, loving, private and individual detritus of A. Beale, Esq., and Master Bobby Beale, and Mrs. A. Beale the wife, God damn her. Here indeed, packed in one compact corrugated bin, was a picture of a complete Beale week, a beloved microcosm—why, such as this should be buried in concrete for the benefit of future historians, and indeed the old bin with its fluted sides did not look unlike the base of a broken-off Doric pillar, most suitable.

Now with the carrying and clanging done, there was no sound in the basement. A quiet, secretive place, full of old cupboards and the big beginnings of gas and water pipes, and where a row of electric meters spun their dials round as silently as the thoughts you could have here. Beale raised his head once to the stairs. The big upper living belly of the house, full of light and air, must be looking its usual self. But no sound. Beatrice must have closed a door on herself. Beale bent down to look into his bin. No sound from above, but down here in the bottom of the house a deeper, stonier silence thick as the foundations. Here was a place for secrets, for being as alone as a man can be with all his most hidden actions, things that he admits only to himself, which will be repeated to no one, never, sly matters common to everyone but still never to be repeated nor ever even joked of.

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ON THIS occasion, the topmost appearance of a letter with his name on it conspired an added reassurance for Beale. Here you are, it said; or: Here you *was*—for the envelope was a few days old and already forgotten, so that those three or four days seemed a very long time ago, and emphasised the miracle of how much had happened since, while the envelope itself was travelling through the various stages, from paper-basket to cleaner's binette right down to big bin. What strange, profound feelings this recent relic provoked! It shouted with the passing of time, the discarding of things, the way we all go along, day after day consuming and discarding and forgetting. Could one remember now, with the facility of younger years, the shape of last Wednesday morning? No. So last Wednesday morning might very well have never been? Unremembered, therefore lost? . . . But Beale tossed such thoughts and the letter away and addressed himself to the moment, to a scrabble of wet brown paper, a very clean-looking screw-up of candle-smooth grease-proof wrapping, dry big fluff of hoover-dust, the peelings of a number of potatoes. From all this, and from what lay deeper beneath, rose a smell, not malodorous, but near to the mysterious smell of rotten grass-cuttings, bringing memories of the ends of gardens, of nettle beds and shadowy composts.

Underneath, more peelings—how many potatoes, for God's sake, did the family eat in a week? Surely all this rich thick peel could be used for something? Hadn't the Germans used it for soap once? Peelings and a brittle sog of grey cinders, some of it damp and reddish but the larger bits sharp and dry and intolerably weightless, full of holes; and wet tea-leaves like ticks sticking to a fluff of cotton wool and a few paper tissues dolled up with red cosmetic blushes. We are descended to the bedroom floor, he muttered; and held up to the light a pale brown nylon stocking webbed as a long wet leaf-skeleton. Why the devil can't it be darned? Beatrice, Beatrice . . . and the old distaste rose, the pall of a hundred small irritations, the woolly cloud of cloying cohabitated habit left over from love, and the more oppressive for here and there a silverish lining. If only . . . and a momentary vision of freedom passed across his mind as the red rubber gloves plunged deeper . . . if only . . . and he saw himself cycling along a road into the sun, all wind and fresh light everywhere, and miraculously only sixteen again . . . if only . . . and he picked out a brand new sharp potato-knife!

Godammit, Godburstit—this was the end! There'd be a fine row about this! Just peel away at good potatoes taking half the potato away and drop the knife in the bowl and carelessly chuck the lot away—am I *made* of potato-knives? he raved. We'll see about it—but first the cheque. Chucking a cheque away . . . carefree, head-in-air, can't-be-bothered Mrs. Talky-Telephone, chat, chat, chuck, chuck. . . .

Careful, Beale, he said to himself, you've got your hands in the mud and that they say is wealth, it's giving you ideas, the loss of a cheque won't kill you.

Won't it? A feeling short of misery had been massing in him as he sifted through so much of value—here a bean-tin with the label boiled off, a fine shining silvery tin, beautifully made, a perfect cylinder, and only thrown away because it was made for the tearing tin-opener. If only that tin had had a lid, someone would have kept it! Good metal gone, gone to be crushed in the Council's big Masher. And a bottle, a well-made small scent-bottle, screw-topped, even with a flower embossed from the glass itself—how much care had gone to this design, held to be worthless because of the machine that churned it out for use only, then for the Masher . . . oh God, what's this wrapped up carefully in newspaper, *another broken glass*?

Or a dead bird? He hesitated, and decided not to open the wrapping. He was here after a cheque, and that was all. Mustn't get too mixed up in this psychic mud, this iddy stuff full of psychological traps. So Beale began to read the newspaper. Had that new Waist-Saving Diet been headlined only last week? You'd think it an age ago. Or was there always a diet in the headlines? Waist-Saving, Waste-Saving, he muttered. Less for the dust-

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bins. And here's Miss Liquorice of Pontefract looking all the better for a tea-leaf on her white bathing costume—Beale's long red-rubber finger edged the tea-leaf a little to the left where the nipple should have been: while his mind edged to the Stop Press where the market prices greyly figured, and he thought, what were Gussies then? But just at the price of Gussies, the paper was abruptly torn, and Beale felt hurt—just torn there, only there, and flung the whole squab wrapped-up package away into the crate.

An envelope! Another and another! Where had we got to in the house now? His mind travelled upstairs around the honeycomb house and settled for the Little Room, a kind of snug all-purpose room they used to save on heating and for breakfast and letters. But none of these envelopes contained a cheque . . . had they then come in the afternoon, and thus been torn up in the bedroom, or kitchen, or somewhere else? You could find your way around the house in this bin, he thought—could you tell the seasons too? And the months? Winter coming on, with Brussels Sprout peelings? Summer's pea-pods? Even special months—May, when there were two kinds of potato-peelings, the last peel of the old potato and the new dandruff scrapings from the new? Dustbins of the Glorious Twelfth, full of grouse bones?

BEATRICE, he thought, as the seasons and dates occurred to him. Why had it died so between them? As far as he could think, he had woken up one morning and felt no further interest in her. He had put it down to his liver. Then he had noticed in the days afterwards its persistence, had realised it was there, or not there, for good: but he could still pinpoint the morning and its extraordinary, clear presence. He picked out a cabbage stalk and a flat slab of congealed porridge—when, last Thursday, porridge? But perhaps it had been growing slowly, and such things became noticeable only at one particular point? As one grows older slowly, yet only at a certain moment notices the mark of age on the face in the mirror? He threw out another carton—biscuits—and a jelly packet: what care had been taken to colour these things, how much printing and inking and pressing and packing—all to waste! Perhaps Beatrice had begun it herself—and he had only followed on, taking her lead blindly? Then when had it begun? He tried to think, then stopped—he didn't care enough any more to bother.

By now Beale was over half the way through his bin, and properly accustomed to the light from the bare electric bulb above, he could now see more clearly the colour of what he was sifting, colour now indeed richer near the bottom where weight and wet had pressed and mixed everything more together, so that tomato soup and mustard and carpet-dust and lumps of vellum-coloured fat fused to make a lathery kind of slime mixed with tea-leaves and ash and coffee-grounds. Brought into brighter presence by the neon-red of his gloves, the varying colours of this mud glowed with the depth of a khaki uniform heightened by red or orange shoulder-flashes: there was here the fine dull pleasure of the contrasting field-uniforms of different nationalities drawn together for such as a Peace March, olive muds and bistre muds and umbers and ochres come into their own with deep new luminosity. In spite of his irritation, and of a kind of sadness as the thought of his wife hung at the back of his mind, Beale felt a more immediate sensual joy as his red fingers played with this pretty stuff. It was not too watery, it had good viscous substance, and it had soaked into most of the different objects disguising their real, or really their false, value. Now a large breakfast food carton was smeared and sogged so that the intricate cut-out of an atomic submarine could hardly be distinguished—a few minutes before, he would have lingered over the carefully dotted lines of this cut-out and probably cursed his wife for wasting it. On the other hand the feeling of the waste, the utter waste of all these good things going to rot and the pennies, the silver sixpences, and the shillings leaking hour after hour from his pocket—this feeling was overcast by a closer fear, for if an atomic submarine was indistinguishable, what about the writing in a cheque?

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Was that lost too, real pounds following the sixpences? He quite forgot that he half-believed his wife would find the cheque in some bag or pocket upstairs—and just then his hand picked up what felt like a more cohesive lump of mud, like a clump of sphagnum muddied over, and he raised it and recognised there hanging like a soaked pelt the old cardigan he had at last thrown away at the beginning of the week. He had thrown it away because the elbows had come right through—it had been a bitter decision, but Beatrice had refused to darn it again, and in fact he himself had not dared even to offer it to the dustman or a local labouring builder. But now, carefully, he shook it, though there was nothing that would in fact shake off, it was so wet—and placed it aside to have it boiled clean again. Leather elbows, he thought, with a dead gleam of hope.

And then underneath, in all that mess, with the smell growing stronger, and the iron sides of the bin dewed with damp and rust-thick grit—suddenly three bright almost clean objects! They must have been protected by his old cardigan! His old cardigan had kept the wet off with its dry underside! And now—a quite white letter, torn into two halves, a bright yellow celluloid duck with a hole in its head, and a dreadful, a perfectly dreadful old pink moccasin slipper with weary wisps of ostrich feathers hanging about the instep. For the first time, in all this wealth of filth, he picked something up with distaste, with forefinger and thumb. This moccasin was not of his household.

This moccasin was something that had crept into the dustbin from outside, it was somebody else's, it was alien and smelly. How could it have got there, how dared somebody—in *his* dustbin? And then he remembered Mrs. Oliphant who cleaned on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and had slumped about with something big and pink on her feet—he remembered these Oliphant slippers descending the stairs on eye-level through the banisters and looking like the huge feet of some big human cook-creature seen from the mouse-eye view of a film cartoon—but Mrs. Oliphant was still a stranger, and with displeasure he dropped the moccasin back in the bin; looked down with sudden love at the yellow duck that little Bobby had played with in his bath since he was so-high; and picked up the two pieces of letter.

Still licking his lips with distaste at the moccasin, and thinking of little Bobby whom they all loved so, who was in fact the brightest silver lining about the place, he began to read a strange and turbulent love-letter to his wife.

He recognised it to be so in the first half-lines—and alone and secretive there in the basement, in the shadeless quiet of the steady electric light, in the linoleum calm, in this soundless, furnitureless part of the house separate from all above, he became instantly agile. He quickly left the bin, and slipped off his gloves. Already a smear or two on the letter—not to smudge it any more, this letter was priceless, it was evidence, and he saw already the Court and its smooth wooden panelling. He held the two pieces of paper together and read on, glanced up once towards the upper house, his ears grown huge for every small sound, and learned that a man who signed himself "Your impatient Kim" had been in his house with his wife. The letter started with love and sentiment and a sickening sweetness, reading like a letter from a schoolboy lover—but then developed into long paragraphs describing in happy detail what they had done together and what next he would do to her—it sounded like a gymnastic display, and it was all penned carefully in blue ink in a curly sloping handwriting, and full of careful curly obscene words, and with his own recognisable furniture intruding here and there as it came into play!

"Darling—oh da-arling!" came echoing from far upstairs in the rigging.

"Ye-eh-es!" he shouted quickly, his hand shielding the letter. The only thought in his mind was not one of jealousy, only wonder that she could be such a fool as to throw such a letter openly into a wastepaper-basket, torn only into two pieces, until he remembered how she went down to the dustbin herself, her blue-flowered apron on, her hair blowing

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in the ringing morning at the side of the house, the side-alley all clothes-pegs and dust-bins and bicycles.

"Oh da-arling, treasure tro-ove! I've fo-ound it!"

He held the letter in his hand and smiled.

"So have I-hi!" he chanted up to the banisters in his best shantyman's shout.

But then he saw the duck again, and the smile left his face. He stood there for a long time with the three things, moccasin and duck and letter, emblems of loyalty and love and distaste, not knowing what he could or would do, before beginning to empty the crate back into the bin to carry it all outside again.

You Had a Dream Last Night . . .

You had a dream last night:
For deep in my primeval sleep
A match was made between my heart and loins
And I moved into love with you
And found your body willing.

Perhaps I've got it wrong.
Maybe it began with you last night
When deep in your primeval sleep
A wielding of desire for some
Fulfilling (too matter of fact and clumsy
In afternoon or evening)
Drew me out of some too private dream
And held us, plough to furrow.

No blame or praise when neither one
Is settled as the cause;
Presumption being base and lean;
For maybe some love-god and goddess
Held both up to the highest of their powers.
And no more thought is with me now
But this: what if some birth come of it
Out of such midnight hours?

Alan Sillitoe

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Colin MacInnes

Welcome, Beauty Walk

The Booma Boys

THE NIGERIAN warriors came home from the Burma war filled by the same impatience with the past that flung their English comrades into Clement Attlee's grim embrace. Among them was a residue of restless souls whose misconduct in Lagos won them the name of "Burma boys." When the late 1940's raced into Nigeria (as they never did to war-sodden, static, "welfare" England), this name became "Booma," and the "boys" really boys: for a new generation of good-bad lads sprung out of the Lagos pavements who were too young to have fought overseas, but old enough to demand that the future happen quickly now. Many of these vivid scamps, innocent as rogues under twenty-three can be, were suddenly gripped by a deep urge to know the world; and as swallows do, they took off from Africa for England with nothing but a compelling instinct as their baggage, stowing away, signing on and deserting, sometimes cajoling minimal fares from rightly reluctant families. Their landfall was in the big English dock cities, and they loped ashore blithely confident that the world loved them and owed them a treasure.

This was the first mass exploration in reverse: the encounter with Englishmen and women not as they appeared in Africa, but as they are. It lasted until the early 1950's by which time the Anglo-Booma boys had prospered, floundered, died or drifted home, and Nigerian emigration had become regulated, with motiveless journeys hindered by both governments. Properly so: for these English Nigerians were good citizens of neither country—only of a precarious realm of their own creation which had nevertheless the beauty that in spite of squalors, it was the only honestly integrated Afro-English society. It was because they had "no reason" for coming to England that these wild ones had the best. Never again will young Nigerians know this shock of a first confrontation; nor will young Englishmen.

Into the London chapter of this community I happened a decade ago without conscious intention, and I cannot remember how: only that one summer day I knew no Nigerians, and a few months later, scores. From these exiles I heard constantly of Africa long before I went there, so that names of tribes, regions, cities, and even streets grew familiar though unknown. One day in this novitiate, a Yoruba friend brought with him an Ijaw countryman who said (not exactly "asked") he was looking for a place to stay, and how about if he stopped with me a while? This was Hawton, who was brave, intelligent, generous, selfish, and slothful save in emergencies . . . the ideal temperament for a soldier and a leader, which he would have been if his manhood had come in other times than tired peace. With him as guide and guarantor, I learned the bush paths of Afro-London, and how to address its denizens appropriately on strange occasions. After a year of staying for a while, Hawton "cut out" from London and settled in Manchester, Moss Side: the most homogeneous and least unwelcoming African reservation in the Black Man's Grave. Two years ago now, pneumonia (which is for Africans what malaria was for us) drowned one of his lungs, and the other the next day; and life that he enjoyed so much, and scattered so much of on his friends, abandoned him in thirty-six hours, surviving only in his infant Afro-Mancunian daughter.

Lagos Interiors

LAKE STREET, Lagos, was as Hawton had evoked it in his tales of waterfront scallywaggery—a comfortable slum behind the

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Marina, blocked from sight of the lagoon by modern offices. I passed several times before the house wondering how, or whether, to announce myself. I knew Hawton's mother lived there with his elder and younger brothers Easter-day and Eugene, but not if they knew of my existence or would welcome memories. Faltering along Broad Street, my doubts were resolved when with a great shout of "Collins!" Jihmon erupted, a cherished old-timer of the London scene, the first of many I re-met in Lagos who belonged to the old boys' club of Tottenham Court Road before the deadline when the Paramount was closed down. Jihmon, who knew Hawton, made off to Lake Street to explain matters, and next day I found myself facing Hawton's mother: she uncomprehending and remote. It seemed I and my story had scant reality, did not connect up with the reluctantly believed and unproved fact of her son's death in that place "England." I told her what I could, which Jihmon "translated"—that is, re-phrased in Afro-English, for he being a Yoruba and she an Ijaw, no intimate translation of my words was possible.

Later I met the brothers and a seaman cousin, and everything fell into focus—thanks greatly to this seaman relative. All I had told the family about my friend convinced them I knew Hawton well... and yet some token of physical reality was missing. Eyeing this mariner, I suddenly recalled that Hawton had once brought home to Camden Town a relation from a ship who saw I was limping with a dislocated toe, asked leave to look at it, and had immediately (and without permission) seized it and set it straight: an incident I could scarcely have invented and he fail to remember. It was indeed the same man: incredulity vanished, and this cousin became the essential witness who had seen Hawton and me in London when he was still alive. Afterwards, by their unspoken wish, I had separate sessions with each brother. Easter-day is a good man carrying a sorrow: which and why? He had gone into the police force where Hawton's father had been a prominent and successful figure, had come unstuck, and the love-affair with a career—perilous for a young man—had turned sour on him. My guess is that Easter was born a trusting man, and that this instinct had been shocked and wounded... so that though he exudes confidence and strength, it is Samson's when his locks were shorn. He was deeply and patiently concerned about all the circumstances of Hawton's death—and obsessively so about his daughter. I was soon manœuvred into the role of emissary to the Lancastrian mother, to ask her if the child could be surrendered and adopted by its African relations. I asked Easter-day had he thought if the girl herself would like to be in Africa? An infant Mancunian suckled on telly, cold rain, and rock-salmon with soggy chips? And I warned him not to expect her to be grateful, or to be astonished if she hankered for England later on.... Easter-day bowed his head to all this European sagacity, and asked me to write him when the child could come.

Eugene, the junior brother, is a Nigerian angry young man (non-literary): startlingly like Hawton physically, but with more practical energy and less glamour. Independence delights him, as it does everyone in the Federation; but the emerging political-social set-up makes no appeal. Again and again I heard this from the young: good work is scarce, all wages are too low: the drop in status from the few rich to the poor millions is catastrophic; and they are looking beyond the national revolution to the economic, and despise the new Nigerian bourgeoisie. It is sad so late in the day—and after it has fulfilled its historic task so valiantly and done so much for one and all—to have to write yet again with disparagement about this persecuted class; but I must record that the Lagos bourgeoisie is quite sensationally unattractive. To begin with, because aggressively vulgar ostentation coupled with complacent ignorance of everything except export and import prices, is so uncharacteristically African: for though Africa has known brilliant traders always, commercial suburbanites are a horrid novelty. Worse still is that though technically a "bourgeoisie" in the Marxist sense, this Lagos lot is culturally petty-bourgeois in the extreme: their social tone corresponding conveniently and disastrously to that of the outgoing managerial "expatriates" (polite local term of hostility) whom they imitate in many ways while striving to eject these helpful aliens more rapidly ("Nigerianisation"). Of new-rich clubs in the federal capital, I append this last malicious vignette: of the sight of dozens of stout young men robed in shapeless curtain material, thickly bespectacled in little bonnets set at jaunty angles on fat heads, shouting at servants and laughing loud and heartlessly before rolling off fast and noisily in tank-like cars: the international hall-mark of the philistine parvenu in every rich society, irrespective of its political belief. (Car owners of the world, unite:

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you have nothing to lose but your manners and someone else's life.) In spare, tense contrast was Eugene, his voice kind and furious, plagued visibly by a frustrated idealism and a dangerous generosity. What independent Nigeria offers to the youth it has excited, is bureaucratic posts which many will delight in; but Eugene and his sort peer over the heads massed in celebration, scanning Africa for a vision.

The night I left Lagos, he took me late over to the mainland to see Rose, Hawton's beloved sister he spoke of so often as if of a guardian angel. We reached the house after midnight, and Rose and her husband and two children were already sleeping. After a minute or two of knocking and of parleying with Eugene, the door was thrown open and there they all were: children tucked tidily away, wife and husband dressed and ready for conversation, all in one room: a deft illustration of three African graces—the faculty for instant, unconditional hospitality; the effortless cohesion of the family unit, the children always in evidence but never in the way; and the sublime ability to receive you wherever they are, simply, without any "explanation" or apology. Rose as a young matron is superb: as a girl she must have been a startling beauty. She is also, as not so many African women are, engaging in her manner; for most of her sisters lean heavily on the stark fact of being female to amaze the male. (It is not surprising to find policewomen rampant in the largely non-Muslim south; bossiness from a static position of strength coming naturally.) Rose, once initial courtesies were cleared away, was concerned only, as her brothers were, with Hawton's child: she brushed aside politely any hint of legal obstacles, and told me to get things moving, please. I am struck by the paradox of this family's instinct to retrieve part of their flesh, and of their neglecting, for two years until my arrival, any practical measures to ensure this.

Boy Born to Riches

THE Yoruba are the chief tribe of the Western Region, numbering millions, and they are incontestably one of those peoples born exceptionally gifted, like the Jews or Greeks. Their culture is as ancient as our own (I speak here of the English), their arts and social organisation complex and sophisticated, and their society traditionally urban: most of the big towns in Nigeria are theirs, and Ibadan, their present (though not historic) capital, is the third city of the continent. I think that to understand their culture one must realise that the Yoruba have known "primitive," "advanced," and "decadent" periods long before Europeans made any contact with them. This fact reveals itself, in their company, by a characteristic blend of energy and nonchalance, of avid curiosity and languid self-assurance, of a passion for novelty coupled with an attitude of "we've seen it all before." Many of the Nigerians I knew in London had been Yoruba: and among them Afolabi of the Ambrose Campbell band. Ambrose ("Bless you, my brother"), a man of generous temperament and of great authority among English as well as African musicians, led for many years the best Yoruba group in London, of which Afolabi was a drummer. The fame of these exiled artists travelled back to their native land through their recordings, and a few years ago they went home to perform on tour; but alas, in their country these prophets had little honour, and they came back disconsolate amid the alien London maize, leaving Afolabi behind in Ibadan.

He was out when I called, but burst in on my siesta at the Paradise Hotel with a cry from outside the door of, "This rascal! I know he has come here to rob us;" and when he came in, "Lord have mercy! You make me twenty years younger. Look! I have put on my European dress so as not to frighten you." We filled in the gaps of several years, and I learned that Afolabi, though he does arrangements for younger musicians and sometimes sings on the radio or television, is no longer a full-time professional; but works in the Lottery department ("Loitering department") of the Treasury. How had this happened—to one who had sacrificed so much, as African musicians must in London where there is little understanding of their art? Afolabi told me he had stayed in Africa because "they spoke to me of my old mother, whom I would never see again if I went back to England, but look! I have grown older and she is the same as ever!" I sensed a deeper reason—a pang of disappointment at the band's reception; and as I walked round Ibadan with Afolabi in the next days and nights, I felt the sorrow of his position. He is an artist in a country where artists now have no status: have lost the esteem of the old tribal society, and have not yet won respect (and decent incomes) in the new one: no longer bards, and not yet stars, they are simply entertainers underpaid by upstart café owners. But at this point one may pause to blush

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and ask—what have we Britons done for them? Nigeria is outstandingly rich in dancers and musicians, especially the majestic drummers whose subtlety and dynamism make Latin-American and even jazz performances seem monotonous and pallid. (I believe their technical "secret" is that they can create melody at will, even as they make fantastic rhythm.) Except for incidental performances by visiting Nigerian troops at English military "tattoos" (how truly a British way of presenting "colonial" arts!), we have seen and heard nothing of these glories in the years when we held power in Nigeria. This is disgraceful: the more so when one remembers the immense success in Europe and America of the African artists brought over from (former) French Guinea by the initiative of a local impresario (who has since become a minister in the independent government). However, recalling that no major exhibition of Indian art took place in England until after independence, I predict a growing vogue for Nigerian dancers and musicians shortly after 1st October, 1960.

"Yes, indeed," said Afolabi, "they did not give me the correct name—'born to riches'—at my christening. Never mind—this is the City Hall: you wish to write your name on the roof?" We entered, escorted by a tropical copper, passed by a meeting of a sub-committee in session on the concert stage (whose members paused in their deliberations to exchange cordial greetings with Afolabi), and climbed up to the heights where the copper provided helpful chalks for our roof-top vandalism. The view was superb: Ibadan, like Rome and Kampala, is a hill city whose generous dimensions are due to its ancient urban status; and from any of its hill-tops, splendid panoramas of card-house corrugated iron roofs rise and fall in groups of Chinese elegance. At night, from these summits, the town glitters like a nest of fireflies from electric flares and street vendors' oil lamps, car lights always at full blaze and, indeed, from fireflies in person. "Lord have mercy," cried Afolabi, as we returned from a late night visit to a Yoruba combo of drummer-singers, entirely traditional (yet as entirely contemporary) save for the accepted anachronism of the leader's electric guitar. (I beg some qualified person to explain why this instrument, in the past two decades, has become the queen-siren of pop music everywhere.) "Lord have—take care, please, of that bullshit there!" He had seized my arm as I had almost trod, at the dark intersection of two highways, on a bowl of charms set out by someone to do something to somebody. The mystic silence of this encounter was shattered, round the next bend, by the mystic din of a band of hooded, gesticulating Engungun men accompanied by ambulating drummers and a throng of followers: "masqueraders" they are frankly called these days, but were once apparently authentic spirits, and still may be such to some. Outside the hotel Afolabi told me, "Well, I shall not walk home through all this magic," and he borrowed some small change for a part-share in a taxi.

Scholar, Priestess, and a Holy Man

TEN years ago Ulli Beier, a Berliner who completed his education in London, joined the University College of Ibadan as lecturer on phonetics, and then in the new department of extra-mural studies. Asked to unfold to Africans the splendours of European literature, he soon found that, lacking points of reference and comparison with anything of their own, his words had little meaning to his students: whereat, with unacademic brain and imagination, he set about searching in the traditional arts of the Yoruba people to see if he could find any helpful analogies; and by a study of their songs and oral literature, he found so incomparable a richness that very soon (as all—that is, few—good teachers do) he was learning from his pupils. He has since become joint founder and editor of *Black Orpheus*, the only literary-artistic revue yet to come out of Nigeria, and which embraces all African (and indeed Caribbean and U.S. Negro) arts in general; and also of *Odu*, a journal specifically of Yoruba studies. The colonial, and then Western Regional governments, which provided publishing facilities without perhaps quite realising yet what they were publishing, passed, in their reactions to these periodicals, through the phases of indifference, alarm, and then, as their world-wide reputations became apparent, an attitude of possessive pride.

Ulli Beier and his wife Susanne Wenger entertained me for a day in Oshogbo, where they live in a "Brazilian" house of fine proportions—so-called because this neo-baroque style was originally brought back to Africa from Latin-America by descendants of those sent there as slaves. I had ventured to "date" this house at first sight of it as late 19th century, and was disconcerted to learn it was in fact mid-20th: so exactly have the Yoruba craftsmen conserved

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a rustic Latin elegance of building. I had met Susanne Wenger for an instant when she had shown in London the cloths she has designed and made in Oshogbo, using re-discovered techniques of dyeing and of printing that have been largely ousted by those of imported fabrics; and much more strangely, depicting in them emblematic scenes which reveal her deep knowledge of Yoruba pre-Muslim and pre-Christian religions. For though this may seem incredible, Susanne Wanger is not "merely" a remarkable artist who has penetrated so far as any European probably can into some of the recesses of the Yoruba soul, but she is even accepted, I was told, by such Yoruba as still adhere to them, to be a priestess of their antique cults. She is a familiar of their holy men, and is admitted to participate in the mysteries of their most sacred surviving shrines.

I am sorry to record that my sojourn in Oshogbo consisted almost entirely in disputations with my hosts. The difficulty, of course, is that to assess the entire value of Suzanne Wenger's work—and even that of the less hermetic activity of Ulli Beier—one would need to know as much of Yoruba culture as they do. It is also apparent that to have studied, lived with, and brought honour to ancient alien arts and cults—ignored by Europeans, and rejected or forgotten by so many of the modern Yoruba themselves—is a rare and brilliant feat. However: my own obsession (since one is oneself) happens to be to try, in so far as a writer can at all hope to do so, to stick to the lurching European ship and help it by self-awareness to find courses that may keep it off the reefs among fresh trade winds and new currents; and not to wave it a censorious farewell from the refuge of any enchanted isle. Susanne Wenger, if I understood her, thinks our continent is doomed, and that such real life as may survive can best be refound in old religious wisdoms. Ulli Beier's position, I believe, is somewhat intermediary, since his encouragement of modern African arts is as active as are his investigations of the old ones. What at all events seems to me indisputable is that the instinct both he and his wife share to make us learn from Africa, and for heaven's sake stop "teaching" it, is wholly right: for the almost total absence of curiosity about, and of respect for, African cultures (I mean as something immediately valuable, and not merely as supposedly dead material for curious examination) is the greatest, and most obstinate European fault; and the vulgar contempt for its social, but non-mechanical, cultural achievements is a shallow betrayal of what, in European culture itself, has worth far above our practical schoolboy skill in gadgetry.

In the afternoon, Ulli Beier drove me to Ede nearby, where Susanne Wenger has decorated two Yoruba shrines with mural paintings. Of these I must say that while they seemed to me splendid both as works of art and in the tact with which the murals were married to the exterior shrine walls (of their religious iconography I cannot, of course, speak at all), they also seemed to me to make these shrines less shrines: to be, by their foreign exoticism, yet one more indication of the decay of this old faith. While these subversive thoughts were passing through my brain at Ede, the priest himself suddenly appeared: "appeared" is the word; for at one moment he was not there and, at the next, he was: an old man of "oriental" more than African physique, stepping towards us with a sort of dainty, enamelled simplicity, totally dignified, and enfolded in a sly, cordial, distant courtesy. (Anything less like what might crudely be called a "witch-doctor" it would be impossible to imagine.) There were bows, murmurings, and graceful genuflections; and from the priest emanated what I can only call a most apparent tenderness. He disappeared into his cavernous house, and returned bearing a gift of kola nuts. I immensely admired the dexterity with which Ulli Beier contrived (with only two hands) to take the proffered bowl, remove the nuts without dropping any, hold them securely, and yet then grasp, as is the custom, both the priest's hands in a gesture of gratitude and farewell. (And I also could not but wonder how the precursors of this holy man might possibly have greeted us in the days when their status could inspire in strangers other emotions besides respectful pity.)

To give myself a last word on all this: the day before my visit to Oshogbo, I had been present, in Ibadan, at the opening of an exhibition which Ulli Beier had organised of photographs and of carvings from adjacent Yoruba shrines. This was inaugurated by the Timi of Ede (for a highly-placed chief, a highbrow, who contributes learned studies to *Black Orpheus*) amid a gathering of Yoruba and European personalities and television cameras. As an exhibition it was wholly wonderful: the photographs, in particular, of priests, chiefs, children, and of domestic and ritual architecture, taken by Ulli Beier himself, were a revelation; and yet....

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In Europe, we have come to accept that exhibitions and museums of "primitive" cultures rise from the very ruins of these old arts, and almost feed on the sad fact of their decay. Was this not happening here in Ibadan in an even more cruelly poignant manner? Where not far from this British Council building was still to be found the exhibition's just surviving raw material—the arts and people and the holy sites themselves?

High Drama in Old Calabar

I FLEW far east to Calabar partly because of its name, and partly because Mrs. Elspeth Huxley told me to. In the salt water days before land and air transport, it was a chief port of the country; but now, being landlocked between the Cross river and the mountains of the Cameroons, it is in woeful decline. To the casual visitor it has the aspect of a township in the Somerset Maugham country: wide, turgid, river overhung by authentic "jungle," battered steam ferries amid photogenic clusters of Efik trading boats, "torrential" rains, and a decayed architecture of immense tumble-down balconied and shuttered wooden palaces. Film companies should abandon Zanzibar immediately, and cross the Continent: they would find their sets and supers waiting for them.

I was driven from the airfield to a hotel which I must call (it will soon be apparent why) the Star of Ind. This seemed ex-sumptuous and vaguely derelict; and oddly in the charge only of two grave Efik youths, one of them, he told me, called U C Ukpong: no owner, no manager and, still more bizarre, no manageress. Sprawled about in the most comfortable easy-chairs, there were seven or eight decorative young Africans, relaxed but somehow seeming interlopers; and no other guest whatever. "Thank God you have come," U C Ukpong said fervently and mysteriously as he demonstrated the mosquito net.

I walked into the old town which totters steeply downhill to the river. From a passing truck a voice shouted, "White man die here!" and I caught sight of the gesture of a finger drawn expressively across a throat. Disturbed, I entered the rococo Zorro Side Bar: three-quarters given over to palm-wine drinkers, with a little sector reserved for beer lovers, strangely enmeshed in wire net. As I cautiously ordered something, one of the picturesque youths from the hotel appeared. I was full of questions, and he readily sat down to solve these perplexities for me. The wire-netting was to protect the beer customers if the palm-wine addicts hurled any bottles. Did they do so often? No, but there were "many ruffians" in the town. And he and his friends at the hotel? They were musicians of the Rogers Jumbo and his Top Bop orchestra (I am not inventing any of this except for the hotel's name), engaged to play at the weekly dance next evening. He himself was Charlie "Parker" (rather confusingly, since he played drums) Jegbefume, his father had been a chief, he had 114 half-brothers (I thought he was kidding me, but I checked later and this is not impossible), and he had abandoned his studies in agricultural science to follow the call of jazz. The Rogers Jumbo group were wandering minstrels from various tribes and regions, who worked along the coast (in "France"—*i.e.*, the Cameroons and Dahomey—as well as in Nigeria) wherever they could find engagements. And things at the hotel, I asked? Ah! Here was the scenario. The owner, an old Indian (rare in Calabar, where most Asians are Syrians), was lying ill and abandoned... ("Ill of what?" "*Ah...*") at the Star of Ind, what time his wife, a local Efik beauty, had made off to "another house he has built for her" (it would seem imprudently) to join her stalwart Efik lover, who has told one and all that he is now owner of the hotel! From his sick-bed, the Indian has riposted by warning the police his rival must be kept off the premises at all costs. And at the dance tomorrow night, Charlie "Parker" foretells, the lover will appear in glory with the erring mistress.

Next night he indeed did: a sullen, peremptory Don Juan, who opened the ball with the handsome and equally commanding wife. The Jumbo band played energetically, terrific in the rhythm section and in its vocalists, highly defective in the melodic brass—who played in tune all right, but in what seemed to me different tunes... but maybe my hearing was defective, because an untrained ear can mistake deliberate "discordancies." Visually, at all events, they were delightful: Rogers Jumbo himself with an Ellingtonian princely bounder's dominance of his excited public, the singers casual and intent, the drummers self-hypnotised, and pint-sized David "Chico" Nwagu out in front of the band, neatly shaking his maraccas and tracing a deft pattern of infectious footsteps. The dancing, as African dancing is unfailingly, was a joy to see: the couples moving face to face not touching

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(yet so much seeming to), then each hiving off to perform little individual solo sequences, connected nevertheless with the counterpoint of the partner's equivalent embroideries: subtle and sensual without a blush—indeed sex, for Africans, after dancing, must be an anti-climax. I was forced by fatigue to leave reluctantly in the small hours, and found on my pillow a note (the first of several) from U C Ukpong. It was touching and futile—the story of his young life and hard times, and could I find him a job or, alternatively, give him a substantial sum to make his fortune with? It is impossible for a European to "resent" or to feel condescending about such requests: for to U C Ukpong I was a multi-millionaire, and any European is known to be a dispenser of jobs and perquisites. I know no people like the Africans who have the gift of asking the most outrageous favours entirely without abasement, or apparent resentment if these are not forthcoming. (As Kenny Graham, who knows them as a jazz leader far better than I do, once so exactly said to me, "They ask you for anything, but they never give you a hard-luck story.") Saddened and frustrated by the thought of U C Ukpong's hopes, I retired, but not to rest. For at first I was woken by a party of boozy fellow-countrymen (Scots, need I say) who shouted through the door that they had driven in from a distant oiling station to the dance, and wanted to drink my health; I declined, and they tried to climb in through the ventilators. The next disturbance was a really colossal row outside the hotel, as if of an uprising. I disentangled myself from the mosquito net and staggered anxiously to the windows, whence a seething mess of cars, bicycles, quarrelling customers and onlookers could be seen deployed. The cause of this (I learned next morning) was that towards 2 a.m. the Top Bop combo, having played for six hours non-stop, called for the habitual refreshments from the management. The owner's wife (or the usurping owner?) sent them four half-bottles of Krola (soft drink) for eight musicians. Rogers Jumbo, in the finest tradition of the recalcitrant jazz artist, had spurned this meagre offering, requesting something adequate, or else. When no more was forthcoming, the band had downed instruments, at which the frustrated dancers demanded money back and, on refusal of this, had streamed angrily into the outer air amid the crash of breaking glass. But as those who have witnessed African public rows will know, there is usually a strong instinct to fight with verbal weapons, and with a kind of non-lethal lurching, scrumming, and wild gesticulation, before any fatal issue is unfortunately joined. To look at, the scene seemed perilous; but no blood was shed, and when the customers' rights and energies were vindicated and appeased, the din suddenly subsided and their rage evaporated in the night.

I spent the next day with the musicians, who were in some doubt whether a state of strike or of lock-out existed at the hotel, since the wife had arrived in the morning (without her lover) and had silently impounded all the instruments (which belonged to the hotel), leaving the critical matter of payment in suspense until next day. Charlie "Parker" had now adopted me as "his" European: to whom, when they do this, Africans are solicitously protective, which one may attribute to interest or affection, as one pleases. We visited together the City Bar to see a performance by The Austin King Joe of Fedral, a magician colleague of his; but though arriving at the advertised time, and lingering for an hour after it, we saw no more than preliminaries by a boys' band of singers, all with little drums like tambourines. Charlie "Parker"—I could see it coming—dreamed of visiting England: a Mecca I should have thought shop-soiled by now, but it would seem not to be so yet: for "London-trained" is advertised as a recommendation for almost anything; and your own London address, so often earnestly requested, seems to be cherished like a talisman. As he laid bare his hopes, and told me of the frustrations of an African jazz troubadour, his voice was soft, wily, insinuating, and candid. He had about his whole person that particular grace and *chic* which is a gift to so many Africans from their gods—of movement, of gesture, and of dress (even when this is minimal; and what other people could ride their bicycles in the rain with mackintoshes intelligently worn back to front, or bear an umbrella hooked practically over one shoulder, or twine a piece of cloth round their middles and seem neat—and dressed!—without looking absurd—and, in fact, looking exactly right?); and elegant most of all by a quite indefinable attitude in human intercourse that one can only call, for want of an apter word, "distinguished." His favourite phrases were "Exactly!" (agreement of spirit beyond reason), "It matters not" (to brush any care in the world aside), and "At all" (meaning something like, "Think nothing of it"). He introduced his odd European friend easily into African interiors

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(and from his point of view, I reflected, how strange my own arrival in the midst of this little crisis must have seemed!), and though gentle to a degree, cracked down in sudden fury when, for instance, an inquisitive immigration official (so he said he was) accosted us in the street importunately. At the airport there was one of those farewells to which I had become accustomed—for over the joy of an African greeting there soon hangs a sorrow at the thought of your departure: which, if it is not authentic, seems so much so that there is no difference.

A People and its Poet

OF THE Eastern Region, the capital is Enugu: not an old city like Ibadan since the Ibo, chief tribe of the east, were a village people, and the town was at first a railhead for the nearby mines. But the setting, backing on mountains, is attractive, and for a new city it could not have found a better time to build itself. During the last decade, the "modern" style—which seems custom-built for Africa—and the notion of generous town layout, have become a happy commonplace; and Enugu has profited by both.

Before I came there, I knew little of the Ibo and was told that they are, so to speak, the Lowland Scots of Nigeria—go-getters lacking graces, with a passion for commerce and for education. If this is as true as any racial cliché, one must surely allow that the Ibo virtues are vital ones for modern Africa: indeed, one may even have the impression that this people has been waiting for the late 20th century fully to deploy their inborn gifts. It is of course delightful to be received, as a visitor, by practised charmers; but no less so to find men who in practical affairs are brisk and accurate. Their hunger for knowledge is most evidently worthy, and one is much abashed to find one's hotel "boy" studying shorthand or arithmetic when one summons him to wash some socks. (Bookshops in Enugu—as indeed throughout both the southern Regions—are as plentiful as sweetshops in England; and none I entered had nothing at all worth reading.) As for the love-affair with money, this has its vexatious aspects, certainly; since it would seem to be the custom to confront the luckless European with a demand not for two or three times what the thing or service may be worth (which would be fair enough), but (I do not exaggerate) for up to twelve times or more. This necessitates not Port Said haggling exactly, but perfecting a tactical technique whereby one manœuvres, if one can, one's rapacious adversary from a position of strength (in which Africans are not always, I think, at their best) into one somehow vulnerable. (How often, during such exercises, I recalled the explorers' tales of endless arguments over lengths of copper wire.) I do not know whether, in international as in petty local trade, it is African practice to propose to foreigners a starting price 1,200 per cent above what may ultimately be expected: if made to Europeans, such demands might be regarded as a partial restitution of percentages no less extortionate extracted by white men in the past; but if the custom should be general, I imagine it must cause to any prospective foreign buyers whose pasts are innocent, a good deal of bemused surprise. In small transactions, at any rate, the notion that if you offer a fair price you win and hold a customer, does not seem to have caught on at all. I would add to this that, in so far as I could see at second-hand, though not so wildly exacting to one another, Africans, who are outstandingly humane and lavish in their human contacts, can also, in financial contexts, be ruthless and blatant exploiters of their fellows. I must also make haste to add that these tetchy generalisations by no means apply exclusively to the Ibo people.

Unburdened of this characteristic European (and tourist's) grouse, I turn sharp about to record that my first visit in Enugu was to an Ibo whom I admire extremely, and this is Chinua Achebe, whose books *Things Fall Apart* may be called, with no excessive praise at all, a classic; and I implore any reader who may not yet have the good fortune to know of it, most instantly to procure a copy (Heinemann, 1958). *Things Fall Apart* is the story of Okonkwo, a tragic village hero at the end of the last century, whose life is defeated by the weaknesses of his strength, and whose downfall is the symbol of the disruption of Ibo life when we Europeans first brought to it our blessings and our curses. To evoke tribal existence so that it seems at once life-loving and wanton, and to describe the white incursion without malice though with fitting irony, is an amazing feat for so young an author; all the more so when one reflects, almost with a start of disbelief, that the measured lyric prose is that of a writer for whom English is not the mother tongue.

In this journal some time ago (ENCOUNTER, October, 1959), Mr. Dan Jacobson, whose

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opinions I respect as greatly as I do his novels, suggested that writing by Africans in English is unlikely to be fruitful. I can hardly believe this, for the chief reason that, while so many African tongues themselves are (I am told) entirely adequate vehicles for a writer, there also now seems to me to exist an "African English" just as there does, for instance, an American or a Caribbean: each of these new English languages having been re-fashioned out of the old primal one by a local genius, and being in no sense whatever "bad" or "broken" tongues. African English is the fruit both, I imagine, of happy transpositions from indigenous languages, and even more, of a dexterous joy in verbal wit that no ear can possibly mistake: the old English tongue is taken, turned inside-out by lively and inventive brains, and magically reformed: a process which our language, so flexible and hoveringly imprecise, most readily abets in the mouth of anyone who really loves to use it. I do not, of course, speak of African political-journalistic English, which is almost as dreadful as our own, nor of African "Babuisms," nor even of the kind of oddity that so many admire (often with inner patronage) in the work of a "natural" like Amos Tutuola; but of what is by now an entirely autonomous linguistic re-creation. One may also observe the sensational flowering of West African prose and poetry written in French, and perhaps be allowed to deduce that if so much has not yet been written so well in English, this may be due to the very different kinds of encouragement that French and English educators and "authorities" have given, in their former African territories, to any literary endeavour. One will also see that in fact, whereas even five years ago very little had been published by English-speaking Africans, in the last few years (thanks, among other causes, to the germinal presence of Ulli Beier) a great deal by playwrights, novelists, and poets very suddenly has: of which *Things Fall Apart* is one of the most striking instances. No one who has frequented Africans can have failed to notice their delight in verbal play, or to admire their Grecian skill at its performance. It is quite possible, among them—and even on quite critical occasions—to score a resounding victory by apt speech alone (one reason for the civility of African disputes already noticed). It is true that this talent has sometimes the defect that an artful sophist can mask acceptably the superficiality of his ideas by deft verbal gambits; and one must also record an almost Khrushchevian aptitude to settle any serious intellectual argument by using the sledge-hammer of some hoary proverb. Nevertheless, the true gift is there; and with no disrespect to any creation there may be in the African tongues themselves, I pray that writers in English—since they have so much to tell us of which we know less than nothing—may grow in strength and prosper: so that Orpheus be black, and not only called so by sympathetic Europeans; also revealing Africa to herself in ways only a writer can: for it is sad for a gifted nation to admire none but politicians and athletes, the only public heroes at the moment.

Rascal City by the Niger

THIS was how Toby, "boy" (as a matter of fact, in this case he was one) at the hotel in Enugu, described the celebrated market town of Onitsha, when I told him I was going to drive there. Though large tracts of the old open-air market still survive, its centre is now a vast Italianate emporium packed sky-high with bewildering cascades of goods, mostly consumer and imported. Stumbling through avalanches of textiles and perfumery, beset by hordes of insistent siren salesmen, I suddenly came out on the Niger: a wonderful moment, for it looks so exactly what it is, one of the great rivers of the world; and while many lose their hearts to seas and mountains, I know no excitement like the first meeting with an illustrious river. A terrace of huge steps, which the waters mount and cover at the ending of the rains, falls in a wide arc down to the fast, wide, yellow-ochred stream, with craft and busy watermen abounding on it. In Onitsha, more than anywhere as yet, I was made conscious of how cosmopolitan Nigeria is, since traders from all its tribes of thirty-six million peoples make their way there. The market seethes; and one senses its age even as one is struck by its modernity: in one of the new roofed stalls a galaxy of gleaming tools, in a plot outside, a lad with an alarming glare selling charms in his little area of magic. From a bookseller's mat I bought tales enthusiastically misprinted by local moralists intoxicated (as our own were after Caxton's day) by access to a press; and among them, *The World is Hard*, *Drunkards Believe Bar as Heaven* (both by S O Olisah), and *Young Harlots a Shame to a Country* by Miss Shalma (whom I strongly

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suspect to be a man). Quotes (all from *The World is Hard*):

> *Wife argued before husband, "I shall not part with you unless you renew my body as it was before."*
>
> *He became poor because he could not manage his property. Secondly, he was confused by the attractive skin of his wife.*
>
> *The wife said, "I don't care, you caused my breasts, which pointed as nails, to collapse."*

But in E Uba's novelette, *The Broken Heart*, is much Babu:

> *After the refreshments had been taken, we repaired into his inner enclosure amidst series of kisses and compromising mutual irregular motions of the flesh and displays. It was all satisfaction.*

On the journey back to Enugu, Andrew, the piratical driver in a Homburg, alarmed me by turning 180° to admire attentively any succulent young wayfarer (and aroused grudging admiration by the enterprise with which he turned the car I had hired into a district bus for such suppliants as could meet his price). The constant procession along the road verges in Africa is an everlasting pleasure; best enjoyed, of course, on foot, when one can sense more intimately a vivid instance among so many of that peculiar plasticity of African movement. The women with babes at their backs and ant-loads on their heads (but nothing antlike in their motions), the men in robes, shorts, or next to nothing, the trick-cyclists with gowns billowing like butterflies, the republic of children (often carrying each other), and the auxiliary goats and laden donkeys, all weave and glide among themselves with the ease of swifts in flight, making patterns alternating endlessly as the birds do. The white man is greeted with "Good morning" (irrespective of the hour of day) or, most attractively, "Wel-come!" (If he stumbles, there are—even more pleasurably—immediate cries of "Sorry!" from persons in no way responsible for his mishap.) The children—to whom it would seem we are at once figures of fun as well as of possible menace—cry out shrill choruses of "white man" or "European" in whatever is their language; and heal any vexation this might cause by waves or bold sallies to extend a confident or cautious hand. Of African children, it is hard to write with moderation: their charm is overwhelming, since they combine tremendous self-assurance and an air of "You may be bigger, but look! I am I!" with almost histrionic deference when this is felt to be appropriate. Europeans are apt to attribute such African infant—and adult—graces to a gift of nature: well they may be, but so much hints at immense care in upbringing, mastered through centuries, and made of a sage blending of intemperate love and severe discipline. For example: Ulli Beier has told me that though African parents are most strict, no child must ever be punished privately; but hauled into the open where a throng of witnesses gathers instantly to whom the enraged parent must justify the punishment to come. An intercessor will appoint herself counsel for the defence, and the mother's wrath must be publicly agreed to be well-founded before she strikes the child in front of this communal jury; and if there is no such general agreement, it is not unknown for a parent deemed unjust to be forced to apologise to the child: a contrast, to say the least, with our own canings by appointment behind closed doors, and quite evidently a procedure of great psychological and social wisdom. Where polygamy exists (I quote Ulli Beier once more), a young mother will not approach her husband again until the child is weaned, so that all her emotive, and even erotic love is centred on the infant: young Oedipus without a rival—or a complex. While this custom is not perhaps transferable to Europe, undoubtedly a great many ancient skills of African upbringing most profitably would be; and I long for the day when among the fatuous piles of books about Africa that explain nothing but their writers' pre- or misconceptions, there will appear just one well-informed study of African education in the home; with a companion volume to explain to us how Africans contrive to respect their old men and women and find them honourable tasks, without having, as we not occasionally do, to banish them into single rooms and public "homes."

Back at Enugu, I was changing for supper when through the window came strains absolutely unmistakable: those of Victor Silvester and his saccharine strict-tempo dance music. When listening, in England, with fascinated horror to his radio programmes, I had always found it hard to believe that the endless fund of letters from his fans in Africa, quoted and mispronounced so confidently between one-steps and cha-cha-cha, could ever really have been penned by so many distant Nigerian lovers of the English ballroom style. Throwing open my windows, I could doubt no longer. For there, on the concrete open-air dance floor of the hotel, an exclusively male class of Silvester addicts was

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in session: some sailing round in pairs, some moving with solo preoccupation holding an instruction sheet, others being admonished and encouraged by a plump instructor. They performed these ghastly gyrations, I must say, very prettily indeed; and as for their invisible mentor, I must allow his was the only English music of any kind I heard extensively in Africa. And yet I shuddered: will the day come, I wondered, when Africans in white tie and tails, and with numerical placards plastered on their backs, will twirl dark belles in leg-revealing tulle and flounces around huge palais, as may be seen in English temples of the Silvesterian art—occasions which resemble a vast terpsichorian congress of head-waiters and female hairdressers? Will this be the new English cultural penetration to carry on, in even more insidious form, the ground-work of the missionaries and of the British Council? I fear so; for Toby, who now appeared, said admiringly, "Just like we saw it in the film! And to think that my grandmother danced like this!" Whereat the little monster sketched a grotesque parody of an African dance (which is, with Indian, the finest in the world): I had to remember his long hours bent over his shorthand manuals to forgive him.

Soon Gabriel Okara arrived, the Ijaw poet, and at dinner I asked him much about the strange delta country that he and Hawton come from, where the great Niger splits and spills into a thousand creeks and estuaries as it soaks itself finally into the sea: a Jeremy Fisher land of dreamy birth-streams that I long to visit—and indeed, the Ijaw are believed to be the oldest inhabitants of Nigeria, driven among their islets and lagoons when peoples like the Yoruba and Ibo came down from the east and north. Britons in Africa love to "pick" tribes, as they might football teams, and constitute themselves their supporters; and if I am to do this too, I renounce tribes more strikingly alluring, and elect the Ijaw, moving among their salt and fresh water swamps in canoes and launches (and even, as I imagine them, at times semi-submerged—though Gabriel Okara deprecated this fantasy). We went together afterwards to a boxing-match of hammer-and-tongs ferocity, where I was as much struck by the referees (changing at each bout) as by the dynamic pugilists. Their skill, patience, fairness, and ultimate authority over the boxers, and the at times frenzied audience, were absolute: watching them, who could doubt for a moment that Africans know how to rule themselves? When a notable local champion, Francis Ibe, made, amid shouts of rapture, his triumphal entry, I found I was surrounded by a wild nest of his juvenile supporters: one of whom, trembling with joy and admiration, wore on his head a cap bearing on its front the new Nigerian flag and the magic date in October, and at the back the date of independence once again with, underneath it, the words BEAUTY WALK.

In Quest of the Fulani

FROM the east I flew up to the largest and largely Muslim Northern Region, whose chief city (though not its capital) is Kano, well known now to travellers as an international air junction. Kano is four towns, really: the old city, still enclosed by twelve miles of crumbling walls; a squalid but vivacious "township" built a mile away for the exiled immigrants from the south-east and west; the (former) European "reservation" (the word makes one think of the Red Indians); and a new light industrial city—which, it is not difficult to predict, will soon become the real Kano as the old city declines into a sort of decorative and derelict Soho or collegiate Oxford. Linking all these are vast avenues leading in the wrong directions, so that the contrast of extreme modernity and of deliberately preserved antiquity recalls that of the ancient cities, with their new French annexes, in Morocco. It would seem that the European is fated to fall heavily for the glamour of Islamic culture, or else to be repelled by its hermetic timelessness. I must confess to belonging to the uncomprehending party, though the visual attraction of an old Muslim city has, of course, an immediate four-star Michelin appeal.

Kano City, seen from the air or on Cinerama, looks terrific; close to, architecturally, it is something of a disappointment—a red mud town, to be quite frank. But this impression may soon change again: for the size and homogeneity of the orange and cream buildings are impressive, and the new mosque, which one may at first view condescendingly with superior memories of old Islamic glories, does gradually win you over: its size and scale and siting in a huge open space are so very right, and its green dome and twin white minarets look sensational from anywhere, with vultures, so unsavoury from near to, wheeling like sail-planes far above it in the blue. But it is really the perpetual spectacle of the inhabitants that seduces you, if you're going to be seduced at all. These are the Hausa, the great

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tribe of the north, tall, tough, and at first approach seeming haughty—a notion due, I believe, more to their flowing robes and stately mien than to any undue severity of nature. They are great traders, as the sight of them sitting protectively on chests of bullion on a bank's mosaic floor, or their cordial man-handling of you if you venture inside their markets, will bear witness. The rich, who till recently owned camels, now chiefly own U.S. cars: thus switching, in a decade or so, from the most ancient and disagreeable form of transport known to man, to the most disagreeable and contemporary. There is also a great vogue for luxury bicycles, shining like those of circus artists: a Pepsicola vendor told me, with no modest pride, that his tall, glimmering machine cost him £40. When not working (which seems fairly often), the Hausa drape themselves in comely groups and postures upon mats. (Africans sit on their spines, not their buttocks, and use their bottoms as a cushion.) There are also the poor, hordes of them, toiling desperately like . . . like themselves; and of lepers, and the deformed, and the blind led by boys with bowls, there is a terrible profusion. I contrived to sleep in the old city (all the hotels are in the new towns), to see what the interiors of the red mud warren might be like. You enter the "compound" wall through a porch whose interior door is hidden from the outer one, are leisurely examined by a guardian armed with a torch, and make your way through an intricacy of starlit courts into a womb-like maze of small roofed halls from which rooms may be entered through low corrugated iron doors covered with hanging curtains. The inner room itself has uncovered mud walls (very hard), a minute Lady of Shalott casement window, mats or linoleum on the earthen floor, and the nocturnal couch is of course the daily divan: nothing is more than a foot high, and you must recall from childhood how to live close to the ground. Rain plopped gently through the mud and lath ceiling of the one I sampled, and the illumination was by oil; but this may not be typical. It seems very cosy, agreeably simple, and slightly claustrophic.

I must now reveal that my chief purpose in coming north was to visit, if possible, the Fulani. This is a tribe by which one can, if not careful, become obsessed much as many Europeans in East Africa are by the Masai. The Fulani have the peculiarities that they are the only tribe which entered Nigeria from the west (although they probably came originally, like everyone else, from the distant east); that they are honey-skinned, very tall indeed, and somewhat "Roman" in their countenance; and that a century and a half ago, under Shehu Usman Dan Fodio (1754–1817), they suddenly erupted in a Jihad, conquered almost everybody, and then withdrew abruptly to the wilds and obscurity again—leaving their descendants as dynastic rulers of a great many northern tribes. Being cattle-breeders, and wanting little modern society has to offer, they do not come much even into small and distant towns: which means that anyone inquisitive about them must leave his base and go and look for them.

I accordingly flew 450 miles north-west to Sokoto, where Dan Fodio himself lies buried in a tomb still the object of pious pilgrimage; for though this is a Hausa city, I was told that the Fulani might be found nearby. Sokoto is called disparagingly, by those who do not like such places, a "bush town:" which does mean, for the visitor, that he must rough it just a bit. A touristic digression now on African hotels. There are four types: anonymous international luxury in a few of the larger cities; more modest but attractive and substantial places, mostly frequented by Africans (and strongly recommended); ultra-minimal establishments as in Sokoto; and then, in most towns, what is called the Catering Rest House (C.R.H.), intended chiefly for government officials (of all races, but in fact still chiefly used by Europeans), where any seemly traveller may also stay. It was sheer pig-headedness on my part, in the interests of culling "authentic" experience, not to lodge, in Sokoto, at the C.R.H. there: since the African inn whereat I floundered was in any case located not among Hausa (let alone Fulani), but in a southerners' annexe-township comparable to that at Kano. The disadvantages of such a choice were the lack of filtered water (or indeed water of any kind, when the yellow Sokoto river failed, as it so often did, to pour from the outside taps); the absence of European food—and try hard as I have for years, the only African thing I cannot love is what comes out of the kitchens—so that I found myself eating meals of *bouillabaisse* and Edinburgh shortbread out of tins; and the rich profusion of insect life —those crazed liberty-takers simply haven't learned yet that man is master of creation; and I believe that, for a European, getting used to Africa is largely a matter of becoming reconciled to an autonomous insect world.

Though Kano market has been famous since

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the Middle Ages ("Morocco" leather really came from there by 1,000-camel convoys over the Sahara), I much prefer the market of Sokoto: Kano's is cramped and stuffy, but in Sokoto it extends under trees over a vast irregular field, with camels, donkeys, and horses with silver saddles resting in a parking-lot nearby. The proportion of local (*i.e.*, non-European) goods on sale is also higher: varieties of animals and their skins, and of fruits and vegetables and spices displayed in jewelled assortments on the ground. The movement is restless and continual, and you are soon sucked into it: people assemble, confront one another standing or squatting down, and then drift away, re-grouping again, yet all part of one whole. There are musicians who sing accompanied by melodies beaten on large steel rings, snake-charmers (who also sing, and who had a trick I didn't like of hurling specimens abruptly among the onlookers), dervishes (is that the word?—amiable, menacing, half-naked leaping men), soothsayers and (I believe) prophets, and on the special market day (Friday, also the Muslim sabbath) there was a girl who pranced naked, which none took any notice of save for a dozen children and an expatriate. You yourself—whether you like this sort of situation or not—are one of the accessory attractions: I saw no other European in the market on any day I went there.

This can be something of a strain: even more so in the new "exiles" section of the town than among the more indifferent Hausa. The state of affairs, I think, is this. An immigrant southerner —Ibo, or Yoruba, or whoever he may be—comes north not because he wants to, but in hopes of making, by his skill and enterprise, a modest pile with which to return and set himself up at home. Thus the rapacity, already noted in the south, quadruples (so far as the white visitor is concerned) in the alien north. With this goes a restless curiosity about you. Africans (to generalise once more) are, I would say, inquisitive but not nosey; and one must remember, if one finds this at all trying, that the cult of "minding one's own business" is English more than typically European (let alone Anglo-Saxon); also that to know who the stranger is, and what his business, was, until very recently, a vital matter in daily tribal life. As well as this, the "modernised" southerner has, most naturally, an insatiable desire to find out from a European, if he can, about how the whole white "thing" works. All this leads, among the less naturally discreet, to importunities—which a white electing to stay solo among Africans quite legitimately invites; and into my room at the Charity Hotel there would come at all hours visitors who would seat themselves uninvited, and put me through an inexorable third degree. It was maddening at times, but very rarely irritating: for to exasperate without actually arousing rage is yet another African achievement—probably because it is all done so very frankly. What one must try to keep in mind, I believe, is that if one admires any quality a people has, one must accept any defect that is its natural companion: one cannot just pick and choose. Thus Africans, divinely unselfconscious, can be inconsiderate to a degree; generously affectionate, they can also be oppressively possessive.

Days passed at Sokoto (I was marooned there for a week by the Mondays-only aircraft), and I had still seen no Fulani. To my dismay, I found there were no taxis to be hired (according to the southerners, because the residents fear that their women would be kidnapped; much more probably, because anyone who needed a car there, had one). Through Mallam Musa, my most promising Hausa contact, I had been negotiating for a private hire, but we were still playing cat-mouse-cat over prices (which had a way of attracting, once agreed on, supplementaries: "And also the needed shillings for the petrol, so my friend says," etc., etc.). Hearing from rival sources (unbeknown to Musa) that the Fulani might appear at the village of Shuni, eight miles distant, on its Wednesday market day, and when a shattering dawn thunderstorm that morning had rinsed out the torrid air, I set off on foot for Shuni. The walk there was a delight: the fresh sky limpid, a breeze, and splendid vistas of the gently rising landscape. (My chief memory of Sokoto is the glory of the pearly dawns and evenings that redeemed the sticky sweltering in between: all life in Africa is made of moments of pure wonder soaring from tracts of trial and fatigue.) I overshot Shuni, which one reaches up an unsigned track; and when I made it, found it to be a walled village hidden in a glade. I had hardly entered its gates when a man of substance spotted me who, rising swiftly from the shades, beckoned me commandingly to follow him. He led me to a fortress-like dwelling into which he disappeared, first parking me in a lofty entrance-hall among suppliants and pairs of sandals. I realised I was to be presented to the Ardo, or chieftain, whose abode this was. After a fitting pause, and preceded by an inaudible fanfare, the

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Ardo made, across the courtyard from his inner dwelling, an Old Vic entrance, flanked by six counsellors or so, and strode slowly until he towered before me (the ground was sloping) with an interrogative and red-toothed scowl. With a clumsy European bow, I said:

MacI: *Worthy Ardo, I am a traveller*
Who to famed Shuni's mart has come, seeking
The wild Fulani.
Ardo: *And where is your cook?*

This disconcerted me, for I had none: nor car, nor any companion; indeed nothing but myself and a white plastic bag containing a raincoat, spare underclothes, and miscellaneous pills. This modest accoutrement seemed not to please the Ardo; who told me, nevertheless, that the Fulani might be expected at some time between dusk and midnight (it was now midday). With this he called on two hefty minions, and signalled to them to bear me off. Our destination turned out to be a circular thatched hut, and my intended fate to sit there for six hours eating spiced rice the Ardo had kindly ordered for me; but I was dying for a drink, and implored them to let me buy some Pepsi. Rashly—being used to finding the dreadful stuff on sale everywhere even when little else was—I had not foreseen that only well water would be available. To drink or not to drink? Five years ago, on a journey to East Africa, though strictly observing every medical admonishment, I had returned home nearly to die after months in a tropical hospital: so what now the greater risk? But even so, the far call of the white witch-doctors was too powerful; and I bade them a brisk adieu and started tramping back to Sokoto. By now, of course, the refreshment of the storm had vanished, and I tottered on like a character of P. C. Wren's. Three miles from a Cola bottle, a huge limousine drew up and I found myself exchanging small-talk through parched lips with an affable minister of education, Northern Region; who told me, with impeccable lack of accent, of his pleasurable sojourns in "the U.K.," and that himself several times pilgrim (but by air surely?) to Mecca, he appreciated the English passion for "a trek."

Two more days went by, and when a treaty with Mallam Musa for a car had at last been initialled, signed, and even ratified, we set out further afield for Wamakko. This expedition seemed more promising, for we soon left the roads and bumped and scuttled over tracks, rivulets and, I regret to say, local crops. At Wamakko, the same ceremony with its Ardo was enacted; but he seemed a kindlier man (or was it the reassuring presence of my escort?), and he had a wooden throne brought out for me —which I insisted (though I fear violating protocol) that he sit upon himself: anyway, he fitted it, and it him, superbly. He heard us out, and Musa encouragingly whispered that our visit and our purpose pleased him. A guide was appointed, and we departed again over fields (and more crops) to a distant village near which the Fulani and their cattle were encamped. I am most glad to say our incursion among them was an entire success: marred only, from my own point of view, by the prompt disappearance of the Fulani women, of whose striking beauty I had heard so much. But the headman (not chief, for the Fulani—like the Ibo, and unlike the Hausa or the Yoruba—are elective democrats) did us proud: gazing down on me benevolently (I am over six feet), he seemed overjoyed to do the honours. He showed us round the encampment, followed by its male inhabitants, and I was presented to the cherished cattle. Cordial messages, twice interpreted by Musa and then the guide, passed to and fro, and there were constant halts for yells of delighted laughter, which I believe and hope were not entirely due to my behaviour or appearance. The headman was most impressed to learn that the gesture of removing my cap in his presence betokened respect: a custom that must indeed seem odd to a people whose own heads are swathed in decorative cloths, the whole sometimes encased in an enormous bell-like covering of heat-protecting straw. When we came back to the car, I asked if there might be any sick among his followers to whom I would be allowed to make an offering. Two ancient, stalwart invalids were instantly brought forward who accepted their gifts with gestures and glances that seemed (can one ever tell?) unaffectedly and genuinely grateful. I shall never, at all events, be able to forget the gaze these old men gave me as they clasped my arms chattering, seeming to look right across hundreds of miles and centuries at a fellow creature.

Beauty Walk, Farewell

EVEN from these cursory notes of a random excursion, it will be clear that in Nigeria what is taking place is not just a "national" revolution of one people in our historic European sense but, together with this, a political

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junction of diverse races in the short space of a half-century. We Britons, who took ages to achieve this among a mere half-dozen peoples, should therefore, I think, speak circumspectly: avoiding, while remaining lucid, that hateful kind of glee with which publicists have pounced (to its entire indifference) on Ghana, while feeling no obligation, as protectors of a Commonwealth conception, to examine as censoriously whatever may have taken place in Pakistan, or England, or elsewhere. And if Nigerian politicians and journalists say odd things, we should remember our own say odder, and that the dignity of a people is never to be assessed by the provincialisms of its public notion of itself; but by its faculty for personal self-criticism, at which Africans—sensitive understandably in the public sector—have well-developed gifts; and mostly, of course, by this people's deeds. Thus we should not expect from Africans any "gratitude" whatever: they see no reason at all for this, deeming our profit from the encounter of our two nations vastly to exceed their own; and being above all (to a degree few Europeans seem to have discovered or imagined) indifferent to us—far, far less preoccupied by our thoughts and customs (save for those that are manifestly practical) than we, who have been so greatly obsessed by theirs. It is their friendship that we should now rather hope to win: which I believe will be given readily enough if we try to help where needed—not at all forgetting our legitimate advantage—and above all, do not meddle. African heroes henceforward will be Africans of the present and the re-discovered past; and it is in Europe that the monuments to Lugard (and to Sir James Robertson, and perhaps to Harold Laski) should be erected—with possibly a *denkmal* somewhere for Adolf Hitler, since the war accelerated sharply the time-table of change; and in Asia, fitting tablets to the real fathers of independence everywhere from British colonial rule—Gandhi and Nehru, and Jinnah and S. C. Bose. And I think most of all we must realise that, in 1960, all Nigerians are preoccupied by social and political alterations in their lives of a swift intensity we can scarcely understand from any similar experience; and that this leaves them with little time or inclination to think up points for cordial abstract chats.

Contradicting my own precepts, I present two fragments of unsolicited advice; but as these are commercial, not political, they may perhaps be acceptable to any roving African eye. Films: when will these be made by Africans for Africa (and elsewhere)? Everything is there ready to hand. The cinema diet at present is Indian, and tattered transatlantic: a minimal investment (of money, though not, it would be hoped, of talent) could surely yield huge dividends of cash and reputation. Tourism: except in Enugu (American students), I met no fellow tourists whatever in six weeks, ten cities, and 4,000 miles. Yet most aircraft and Kiplingesque trains I travelled in were half empty (in the trains, above third-class), and so were all but a very few entirely adequate hotels. Facilities exist, and the attractions—despite a stiff initial air fare or sea passage—are varied and prodigious. Once again: would an initial investment not quickly multiply?

To the rag-bag of reasons why Africa exerts—when it does—so deep a fascination on the European mind and heart (additionally, that is, to our hope of making money there), I now offer up my contribution. Africa is Eden: loved for what is lost, hated because we have lost it: longed for by distant recollection, despised because by ourselves rejected. Out of the Garden, its last inhabitants now make ready themselves to come forth forever. May they carry into the world a closer memory and warmer gratitude than ours.

Envoi

I END by quoting one of the many farewell letters I was handed by friends made so quickly in so many places that I came to knowing no one.

> I hope you will not be so much irritated for informing you that I shall be proceeding to Lagos unfailingly to-morrow.
>
> Because yesterday I was phone that my Mom is seriously ill and I am sure I shall be back recently.
>
> I thank you very sincerely for the hospitality you have been rendering to me.
>
> May the almighty God be with you surely he will assist you in all your deliberations and undertakings.
>
> May the almighty be with us till we meet again with the greatest joy and happiest amen.

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POETRY

No Hatred and No Flag

By Michael Hamburger

THERE is something unexpected, almost anachronistic, about the appearance of an anthology of war poems in 1959, and an international, tri-lingual one at that.* I doubt that it would have found a publisher anywhere but in Germany, or that it would have materialised at all but for the enthusiasm and devotion of the three editors. Two of them were students when the project was undertaken, the third was a university lecturer. All three took on this difficult and ambitious task without any immediate prospect of publication. It is significant, too, that the model for this anthology was one published in Germany shortly after the First World War with the apocalyptic title *Kameraden Der Menschheit: Dichtungen zur Weltrevolution.* Its editor, Ludwig Rubiner, was one of those pacifist revolutionaries who dominated the later phases of the German Expressionist movement. "Every poem in this book," Rubiner had written, "proclaims its author's determination to oppose the old world and to march into humanity's new land of the social revolution."

That was exactly forty years ago, in another age, another climate, as excessively hot as ours is excessively cold; and Rubiner confined himself to French and German poems, whereas the new anthology includes Great Britain. After acknowledging their debt to the earlier work, the present editors go on to say that

> they have no such political tendencies. But, after a second terrible war, they have aimed at something similar. They wish to show how war has been understood in modern literature, and what the poets of three great European countries have said about it.

The emphasis now is on knowing, not on doing. True, I have quoted from the English preface; and it is an interesting reflection on such international enterprises that the tone, at times even the wording, of the three prefaces differs quite considerably.

The anthology is published as one of a series of paper-back classics. One may assume that this circumstance introduced a certain element of compromise. The editors imply as much in justifying their decision to include only "poets of the older and middle generations, the younger poets represented being those who are now dead." The justification is that such limits help the anthologist because "they make for detachment;" and "quality was indeed the criterion, in spite of the fact that the specialisation of the theme created certain difficulties, for the editors believe that committedness and quality are not mutually exclusive in literature." (The German and French prefaces mention no such difficulties, and are somewhat less cautious about the relationship between committedness and quality.) It is certainly to the requirements of the series that one must attribute the main shortcoming of the anthology, the very simple one that it contains far too few poems to do adequately what it set out to do. Since every poem appears in three languages, only fifty-one poems could be included. To "show how war has been understood in modern literature," or only in modern poetry, would have called for at least three times the number; to do any kind of justice to the poets included, let alone those who had to be omitted, would have called for even more. Only an activist anthology like Rubiner's, less concerned with literary standards than with the assertion of a single point of view, could have overcome this limitation of space.

One reason is that there is no single criterion by which a war poem can be clearly distinguished from other kinds of poems; especially

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not at a time when peace is only a sequence of limited wars, either political or military. Even the distinction between soldiers' and civilians' verse, still applicable in the First World War, ceased to be very relevant before the Second; and indeed the finest and most characteristic poetry of the First World War was that produced by the impact of modern warfare on sensibilities essentially civilian. Paradoxically, therefore, modern war-poetry has become almost synonymous with anti-war poetry. By the end of 1915, when both Rupert Brooke and Julian Grenfell (a professional soldier) were dead—and Rilke had repented of his poems in praise of a war in which he took no active part—all but a few thick-skinned civilians were aware that the traditional affirmation of war on heroic or patriotic grounds was no longer a decent subject for poetry.

THIS IS NOT to say that patriotism and heroism had ceased to affect the attitudes of combatant poets, or that war no longer afforded its moments of glory and exhilaration. Though it was inevitable and right that most of the poems included in the new anthology should record the pity and futility of war, the one exception—Charles Vildrac's *Relève*, which celebrates the joy of having "come through" for the time being—makes one conscious of a certain editorial bias. Of the poets who entered deeply into the contradictory moods and motives of the modern soldier, Herbert Read is represented only by one brief section from *World Within a War*, not by *The End of a War*, the retrospective *To a Conscript of 1940*, or the poems on the Spanish war; Apollinaire only by one melancholy meditation, not by the more exuberant battle pieces or the ingenious analogies between love and war in *Ombre de Mon Amour*; Edward Thomas only by *Rain*, not by his unconventional defence of patriotism, *This is no case of petty right or wrong. . . .* Yeats' *An Irish Airman Foresees his Death*—a defence of pure heroism—was omitted; surely not on literary grounds? So were Brooke, Sorley, and Grenfell. As for the German poets of the First World War, the editors found space for a premonition of doom by Georg Heym, who died in 1912, but not for the war poems proper of August Stramm, Alfred Lichtenstein, or Theodor Kramer. Heym's poem is both distinguished and typical of the peculiar mood of his German contemporaries; but so are the onomatopoeic experiments of Stramm, the ironies of Lichtenstein, and Kramer's realistic accounts of war experience. It is a pity, too, that in an international anthology we had to be deprived of Ezra Pound's comment on the First World War in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* or Randall Jarrell's on the Second, *The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner*, presumably because they are Americans—but at least one Austrian poet, Georg Trakl, is included. Manifestations of international goodwill, of course, demand a protocol no less rigorous than any other form of diplomacy; and it is apparent enough that considerations of national prestige and equal representation proved a worry to the editors.

The Second World War was even more of a problem. Here the German contribution is confined to poems of exile, or at least of non-participation, and one misses the younger age-groups. At least one younger German soldier poet, Wolfgang Borchert, would have qualified for inclusion both because he is dead, and because he actively opposed the war. France is represented by Boucher, Supervielle, Eluard, Michaux, Aragon, Goll, and the unidentified Resistance poet known as Pereyrol. Elegy and exhortation predominate, as they were bound to do; again the war appears as a continuation of the pre-war conflicts rather than as a distinct experience comparable to that conveyed by poets such as Vildrac, Owen, or Schnack in the First World War. Max Jacob's *Reportage de Juin 1940* would have helped to particularise the French experience. Even the British contribution fails to redress the balance, despite the inclusion of Alun Lewis and Sidney Keyes. What Lewis' *The Unknown Soldier* has in common with Keyes' *War Poet* is that both are symbolic and archetypal to a degree that suggests a radical difference from poets of the First World War such as Siegfried Sassoon; I shall have more to say about this difference. Of the poets who would have been eligible for this anthology, Keith Douglas, perhaps, was the only exception; but his work is not represented.

Even an anthology less severely restricted by its length and by the difficulty of translating every poem into two foreign languages would provoke such criticisms as I have made. The principal fault can easily be remedied by a second, very much enlarged, edition. Meanwhile the editors deserve nothing but gratitude for having made many excellent poems available to readers of at least three nationalities. The English versions by Christopher Middleton, who has translated all the French and German poems, combine literal accuracy with the greatest possible degree of verbal tact. There are biographical and bibliographical notes on all the poets included.

THE First World War coincided with an international literary revolution which was also internationalist. The present anthology opens with part of the poem *Europe* by Jules Romains, whose Unanimist movement was closely associated with the pan-European aspira-

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tions of Romain Rolland. Published in 1916 by a poet who had served in the war, Romains' *Conjuration* protests:

Europe! Je n'accepte pas
Que tu meures dans ce délire.
Europe, je crie qui tu es
Dans l'oreille de tes tueurs.

Europe! I shall not accept
Your death in this delirium.
Europe, I shout who you are
In the ears of your assassins.

Even where internationalism was not a creed, it was a reality. Just as Charles Sorley had gone to Germany shortly before the war to discover Hölderlin and Rilke, and learn to understand German attitudes, so the German poet Ernst Stadler had become attached to England while a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. Both were killed in action. Stadler was also one of three poets born in Alsace-Lorraine—René Schickele and Yvan Goll were the others—to whom the compatibility of French and German culture was self-evident. The new philosophy of Bergson meant as much to T. E. Hulme in England as it did to Jules Romains in France; and Hulme's influence on a whole generation of British and American poets is sufficiently well known.

THE title of the new anthology derives from a poem by Réné Arcos, who belonged to the same literary group as Romains and Vildrac. In his poem *Les Morts* it is the dead who prove that unity which the war has arbitrarily and viciously disrupted:

Serrés les uns contre les autres
Les morts sans haine et sans drapeau
Cheveux plaqués de sang caillé,
Les morts sont tous d'un seul côté.

Pressing each other close the dead
Who own no hatred and no flag
Their hair veneered with clotted blood,
The dead are all on the same side.

In a poem by Richard Aldington, *Meditation*, the same self-evident cosmopolitanism attaches to his rather uncertain hopes for the peace:

I have what I yearned for—
The chance to live my life out to the end.
And it is a great joy to sit here quietly and think
That soon I shall return to her and say:
"Now it is a free man that kisses you."
There will be strange meetings in cities for me,
The hush of summer in English gardens,
The glitter of spring in Italy,
The old cafés in Paris.

The doubts that follow these fantasies probably proved to be justified. Whether they began with preconceived pacifist ideals or were converted by the sheer horror, boredom, and waste of trench warfare, whether their protests were dignified and urbane or callow and hysterical—as in the case of many German Expressionists—the fact is that the poets were right about the war, the politicians and the press were wrong. Not only did Europe never recover materially from the war, but the terrible disparity between civilian and military experience created a rift whose effects on life and literature can still be seen and felt, even after a second war. It is the disparity satirised by Sassoon:

Does it matter—losing your legs?
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

In England, of course, the immediate rift was not as extreme as in France or Germany. Though the civilian population of Germany in particular suffered much greater hardship than that of Britain, the sympathy, the guilt, and the anger expressed by many of the older British poets at the time were at least an attempt to mend the disparity. Even in Britain there was a body of opinion well summed up in Hilaire Belloc's not very funny epigram, *The Pacifist*:

Pale Ebenezer thought it wrong to fight,
But Roaring Bill (who killed him) thought it right.

But as early as 1914 Alice Meynell guiltily contrasted "the hush of summer in English gardens" with the continental battlefields in her poem *Summer in England 1914*. By 1917 Kipling was moved to write his angry poem on Mesopotamia:

They shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,
The eager and whole-hearted whom we gave.
But the men who left them thriftily to die in their own dung,
Shall they come with years and honour to the grave?

G. K. Chesterton's epigram *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* makes the same point; and Sir Henry Newbolt's apology for pacifism, *The Non-Combatant*, goes considerably further in trying to understand the younger generation.*

IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT Kipling is still compelled to exaggerate the eagerness and wholeheartedness of the victims, and that the heroic diction of Newbolt's poem merely succeeds in

* At this point I would like to acknowledge my debt to Patric Dickinson's excellent anthology, *Soldiers' Verse* (Muller, 1945), which includes the poems cited above, and to Mr. Dickinson's recent radio programme on Charles Sorley.

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bringing out the deeper incompatibility of the two generations; but even young poets like Sorley, for all his scepticism about the war and his strictures on the "sentimental attitude" of Rupert Brooke, did not break entirely with the older conventions of diction or sentiment. In the immediate post-war poetry of Robert Graves and Edmund Blunden the disparity had become an inner one, a conflict between a tendency towards the pre-war nature idyll or faery romanticism and the new starkness. Such inner conflicts had to be fought out over a long period; Blunden's *Report on Experience*, his best-known poem about the disillusionment shared by so many survivors, appeared in his collection of 1929; Herbert Read's *The End of a War*, as late as 1933.

In Germany, with no stable ruling class both able and willing to make the necessary adjustments and concessions, the conflict of the generations took such violent and irreconcilable forms that it seems to foreshadow all subsequent German history, even including the present division of the country. At least four of the prominent Expressionist poets became active revolutionaries; Franz Werfel and Ernst Toller in the early inter-war period, Bert Brecht and Johannes Becher up to our own time. Of these only Brecht is represented in the anthology, with two poems of exile and a radical anti-militarist poem in his later, unrhetorical manner:

Wenn es zum Marschieren kommt, wissen viele
nicht
Dass ihr Feind an ihrer Spitze marschiert.
Die Stimme, die sie kommandiert
Ist die Stimme ihres Feindes.
Der da vom Feind spricht
Ist selber der Feind.

When men march off to war they do not know
That their enemy is marching at their head.
The voice which gives them orders
Is the voice of the enemy.
He who speaks of enemies
Himself is the enemy.

This recognition goes back to the First World War, and it was a pretty general recognition. In his poetry at least, Brecht remained true to it even in the teeth of Communist policy, which distinguished between "just" and "imperialist" wars. "There is no such thing as a just war," the young Charles Sorley had written in a letter shortly before his death in action. Wilfred Owen lived to write some of the most powerful poetry of the century on the same theme.

Never since has there been such agreement between the best minds in Europe. If I have dwelt at some length on the shock of the First World War, without being able to trace its traumatic and external after-effects in any but the most general terms, it is because even the Second World War was something of an emotional anti-climax in comparison, and one that followed almost logically, though not inevitably, from the greater cataclysm. The eloquent *Lament* by F. S. Flint conveys something of the magnitude and nature of that disaster:

The young men of the world
Are condemned to death.
They have been called up to die
For the crime of their fathers.
. . . . . .
The young men of the world
No longer possess the road:
The road possesses them.
They no longer inherit the earth:
The earth inherits them.
They are no longer the masters of fire:
Fire is their master;
They serve him, he destroys them.
. . . . . .
The genius of the air
Has contrived a new terror
That rends them into pieces.

I BEGAN by saying that there is something unexpected, almost anachronistic, about the appearance of this anthology. The cult of war poetry, or rather of certain war poets, after the First World War was mainly due to the division between the soldiers and those who had continued to "gobble their muffins and eggs;" it was a tribute paid by the community to those it had sacrificed, though the predilection for Rupert Brooke in England suggests that it was also a sop to guilty consciences still not ready to face the worst about the war. There is no comparable cult of the English poets who died in the last war; if the poems of Alun Lewis, Keith Douglas, Sidney Keyes, or Drummond Allison are still widely read, little evidence of it appears in print or conversation. For obvious reasons, it is the Germans who have found it most difficult to get over the war; and it is to their moral discomfort that we owe this anthology.

Though it would be a mistake to assume that the after-effects of the last war were less serious outside Germany, merely because they are less obvious, the war itself does not emerge as an event either as vivid or as shattering as the First World War. In so far as it was an ideological war, it was an ideological war that was fought too late. What survived of the international humanism of the First World War was a lost cause before the Second began; Spain and Munich marked its defeat. Of the twelve German poems that represent the later period here, seven are poems of exile by Brecht, Hermann Broch, Hermann-Neisse, and Else Lasker-Schüler; Gottfried Benn's poem is a meditation

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on the dead of the First World War; Oskar Loerke's a reflection on the guilt and helplessness of those anti-Nazis who remained in Germany; those by Gertrud von le Fort, Marie-Luise Kaschnitz, and Walter Bauer are reckonings after the event. The lost glory of France is nostalgically evoked by Aragon and Goll, but neither Resistance nor exile grow palpable beneath their rhetoric.

The English contribution, too, has more to say about the so-called peace of the 'thirties than about the war itself. The poems by Auden, Spender, and MacNeice—*Refugee Blues*, *Two Armies*, and *Débâcle* respectively—commemorate the lost cause. C. Day Lewis' *The Misfit* could almost have been written by Thomas Hardy during the First World War, though its humanity is none the less welcome for that. Even without the prohibition on the younger living poets, it might have been difficult to fill the gap. Hamish Henderson would have helped. Henry Reed's well-known training pieces are symptomatic enough in their dryness, but they are marginal to the issues of the war. F. T. Prince's fine poem *Soldiers Bathing* resembles the two by Sidney Keyes and Alun Lewis in its search for the archetypal, underlined by the parallel with Michelangelo. Even Keith Douglas refers back to Isaac Rosenberg in the same way as Alun Lewis to Edward Thomas, Sidney Keyes to Yeats, Eliot, Rilke, and a host of other poets. In re-reading the poetry of the last war one can hardly escape the general impression that most of the younger poets were more interested in the past than in the present, or that something prevented them from responding to the war with the same immediacy as their predecessors of the First. The different character of the fighting may have something to do with it; but the main reason is surely that the earlier war and the inter-war conflicts had exhausted the capacity for a certain kind of moral passion. In the general run of English poetry written at that time, whether of the wry or Neo-Apocalyptic kinds, there is more self-absorption than pity or anger; more concern with personal attachments than with a public cause; more literature than life.

Keith Douglas, as brave and efficient a soldier as any who served in the war, put it like this in a letter from Egypt:

> To trust anyone or to admit any hope of a better world is criminally foolish, as foolish as it is to stop working for it. It sounds silly to say, work without hope, but it can be done; it's only a form of insurance; it doesn't mean work hopelessly.

His exciting prose account of tank-fighting in the desert, *Alamein to Zem Zem*, proved that it could be done, though Douglas neither hated the enemy—see his *Elegy for an 88 Gunner*—nor accepted the public school code that governed the conduct of most of his fellow officers:

Peter was unfortunately killed by an 88;
it took his leg away—he died in the ambulance.
When I saw him crawling he said:
"It's most unfair—they've shot my foot off."

How can I live among this gentle
obsolescent breed of heroes, and not weep?
Unicorns, almost,
for they are fading into two legends
in which their stupidity and chivalry
are celebrated. Each, fool and hero, will be immortal.

The prose book confirms Douglas' exasperated pity, and his new kind of courage, a courage despite attachment. This is his own description of his attitude to the battles he recorded: "I am thinking of them—selfishly, but as I shall always think of them—as my first experience of fighting: that is how I shall write of them. To say I thought of the battle of Alamein as an ordeal sounds pompous: but I did think of it as an important test, which I was interested in passing. I observed these battles partly as an exhibition. . . ." How very English, and "public school," this would sound to a foreign reader! And in practice Douglas' detachment was modified by his loyalty and his pity.

On the opposing side there may have been less detachment at first, though not as little as official pressure demanded; this anthology doesn't tell us. The tone of the following poem by Walter Bauer (who chose to emigrate to Canada after the war) is equally informal, equally truthful about the German civilians' ordeal in the last war. The English version is called *Showing Something to a Stranger*:

"Look, that is where the dead lay then,
And everywhere in the squares of the city,
Blackened and dried by the flames,
Grown remarkably small, like parcels without contents,
They weighed almost nothing.
Storms of fire raged everywhere, nothing could stop them.
A roaring from the sky, like . . .
It's very hard to explain this to a stranger . . .
You understand: the cities were ripe for it.
And then: in these cellars—you see?—
Where weeds drift now, the cold death-smell of tattered time—
In these cellars one waited.
What for? you want to know. . . . Well, to survive.
It's quiet now. Nothing there. Not a sound.
But these were the places where one waited to die or be spared,
These caverns of disregarded burial.
Masses of water suddenly burst in
And cut short the hours of waiting, brutally rather.

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Here most people spent apparently
Endless hours of apprenticeship to another world.
Did they stand the test, you ask?
No."

The editors had to resort to a poem of the First World War for a concluding poem that would strike a more hopeful note. It is by the same poet, Réné Arcos, who provided the title for the anthology. "Tout n'est peut-être pas perdu," the poem begins doubtfully, and ends:

Rien n'est perdu puisqu'il suffit
Qu'un seul de nous dans la tourmente
Reste pareil à ce qu'il fut
Pour sauver tout l'espoir du monde.

Nothing is lost; enough it is
If one of us through chaos can
Be faithful still to what he was
And save the hope of every man.

If the evidence of the poets counts for anything, modern war does not permit any civilised man "to be faithful still to what he was." There is a point where detachment, however heroic in effect, becomes a kind of madness; and there is a close relation between the increasing need for psychological detachment and the tendency of warfare itself to be conducted more and more by indirect mechanical means. Keith Douglas, the detached observer and brave participant in the last war, was not wholly immured within his tank; he could even withdraw from battle at times to take wounded men back to safety behind the line. If there is a Third World War, it will be fought by remote control in a state of dissociation indistinguishable from madness. And there will be no war poetry at all to record it.

The Cherry Tree

His answer to the cherry tree
She peoples with lack-lustre fruit:
This was a pretext of the night,
The nightingale's unlucky perch
For renaissance of his pain,
A darker index of the moon,
The radicle from foot to star
Both feet go searching for.

Such common-prayers are by day
His question in the cherry tree,
An ever-during commonplace
Of "you" and "us" and "them" and "me;"
She bids the dusky blossoms haste
Her butterfly into a moth,
To wash the cherries from his wings
And dry his wings along dry bark.

Robert Nye

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THEATRE

Down Among the Dead Men

By Nigel Dennis

A GRANDSON of Lady Tree recalls her going on tour with a company which had one of those large Pullman drawing-rooms at its disposal on the train journeys. This great car, filled with artistes of every sex, was shunted into a siding at Rugby one evening and a red-haired ganger came along to hit its wheels with a hammer. He had just struck his opening chord when he noticed for the first time that this was not an ordinary coach; and staring inwards through one of the great closed windows his eyes were dazzled by the spectacle of some dozen brilliant beings lounging to perfection upon stuffed chairs and moving from place to place with the rare, almost mannered, grace that comes so naturally to members of the profession, even in sidings at Rugby. In the centre of it all, erect in the largest arm-chair, sat Lady Tree herself—ancient, painted, and splendid—and it was this ultimate vision of the extraordinary that caused the red-haired boy to drop his hammer and shout excitedly to a friend: "Hey, Bert! Come and 'ave a look at these persons!" His cry was heard—by Lady Tree. Rising from her chair, she wound down the window and, fixing her eye upon the gaping boy, said in a slow, throbbing voice: "And *whom* may you be calling *persons*—you carroty-headed little loon?"

There is such beauty in this scene that the imagination never tires of recalling, re-shaping, and re-embellishing it. To look up from the dirt and cinders of the dark Rugby earth and see, brilliantly illuminated and through sheets of pure glass, this living tableau of moving gods and seated idols, is surely to see the theatre as a groundling should? The lips, all moustached or carmine, seen to move, but no words heard; the hair, now puce, now orange, now vivid yellow; the delicate hands draped upon the crimson chairs, Edwardian brocades and pipings; the varied dress—silk slips peeping through open dressing-gowns; the fresh frock of the pale ingénue; the lighting, falling from those golden Pullman wall-brackets now upon the open pages of Strindberg and Agatha Christie, now upon powdered cheeks nicely turned to shimmer to the best advantage... there may be inaccuracies in this description, as there may have been flaws in the production which has inspired it; but of one thing we can be perfectly sure: *the spectacle was entirely unnatural*. The very harshness and shock of the dialogue suggests this: the raw words, on both sides, are those of people brutally startled out of a dream of pure style, Delphi roughly kissed awake by Rugby. The awestruck boy with the hammer had only a limited vocabulary, but he used it as best he could and he used it correctly. These were not people. These were persons. The whole nature of style turns largely upon this distinction.

Most actors, to-day, try their best to be people—and most playwrights, of course, do their best to see that they have parts only for people in their plays. Persons are absolutely out: the object is for the people in the auditorium to feel that those who are on the stage are as frankly people as they are themselves. When Mr. Robert Bolt, for instance, writes *A Man For All Seasons*, it is not his intention to let any Tudor person excite our broad imagination. "The action of this play ends in 1535," he notes, "but the play was written in 1960, and if in production one date must obscure the other, it is 1960 which I would wish clearly to occupy the stage." Such a mischievous wish is easily granted by presenting the stage as Tudor and its occupants as people of 1960. Mr. Paul Scofield appears in the costume of Sir Thomas More, but not in the person of Sir Thomas More; his duty is not to let his old-fashioned clothing disguise the fact that he is a very decent Q.C. caught in a tight corner of 1960. That is why we must regard his cloaks and chains as mere whims—comparable to the Regency wallpaper in the modern drawing-room which, far from indicating how far back the owner is in time, announces how well he is keeping up with modern fashions. Mr. Scofield's face, humanely haggard from the start, and his voice, sweetly democratic throughout, declare without any words being really necessary that, unlike Oedipus or Lear, he is

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going to meet a fate that will be essentially *popular*. In this, he will be helped first by Mr. Bolt, who will see to it that no trace of the ostensible epoch appears in the spoken words, and second by the supporting players, who will guarantee to be only 1960 people, however Tudorially they may be dressed and despite any handles that may be affixed to their names. As Cardinal Wolsey, Mr. Willoughby Goddard fails badly in the above respects, playing the role with style and appearing to be an impressive person; but the rest of the cast understands the modernity of More's problem as thoroughly as could be wished. One sees immediately, for instance, that the Duke of Norfolk is not *really* the Duke of Norfolk: inwardly, he is as much a people as you and me, and his inward will always peep out through his outward. Even Henry VIII, who differed in so many ways from ourselves and might therefore have been portrayed as a person of Tudor times, or even a personage, can be seen to be a pure people, no matter how loud the trumpets or how royal the gestures. The argument here, no doubt, is that if everyone else on the stage is going to be people, it would be unfair to Henry to make him anything so unnatural as a person: this is known, in all artistic matters, as the democratic fallacy, and inflicts mortal injuries upon the stouter figures of the pre-democratic past. Indeed, it injures large figures of any period—as we may see by Mr. Terence Rattigan's *Ross*, wherein the highly exceptional person of Colonel Lawrence is reduced to people's stature as neatly as if an executioner's axe had taken him off at the neck.

THE films are instructive in this matter. When Mr. Spencer Tracy appeared in Hollywood, his incomparable merits—humility, integrity, decency, loyalty—were seized upon eagerly. It was seen that his place in a film was one step down from the dramatic top—which would be filled by Mr. Clark Gable. While Mr. Tracy's honest face underwent a hundred pangs of unrequited love and long-suffering loyalty, Mr. Gable's ugly, black mug slew the girls and won the prizes. It deserved to. Mr. Tracy's virtues were simply not dramatic. Mr. Gable's vices were.

It is this order of precedence that we are changing to-day. Not content with being good ourselves, we want to make our dramatic principals good too. Mr. Spencer Tracy—or Mr. Paul Scofield, or Sir Thomas More, or whatever we like to call him—is upped into top place; while Mr. Clark Gable degenerates into a perverted Turkish pasha or something nasty like Thomas Cromwell. Our heroes bathe us from the stage in sweetness and decency, and so great are their efforts not to appear heroic that we scarcely notice that they are on the stage at all. Because we believe that life and drama should be synonymous and identical we have forgotten that the wand used to wave in the opposite direction—that authors liked to make their characters much larger than life, and actors pulled on high boots and wore tall masks to make sure that their decapitations were of consequence. Probably, it became irritating after some hundreds of years and may even have seemed artificial. But never, surely, as artificial as the beheading of Mr. Scofield for no worse crime than that of struggling to be as undramatic as possible?

If we must have heroes who are good all through, is there no way in which we can make them more interesting? Aubrey tells an amusing story of Sir William Roper coming to More's house in search of a bride and being led upstairs to the bedroom where More's two daughters were asleep in one bed. More whipped off the covers; the naked girls whipped over on to their stomachs, and Roper, remarking that he had now seen both sides of them, chose Margaret as his bride by tapping her on the behind. There was no suggestion of this in Mr. Bolt's play, presumably because the work is addressed to 1960, when courtship of the Lord Chancellor's daughter is so much nicer. But this only shows how careful an author should be when he summons up the dead to instruct the living. Robbed of the ginger that made them persons, they are a flaccid people. Deprived of their period poses, stances, and vulgarities, they are wholly dependent on us to give them a style—and style is the one thing we are determined not to supply. We steal the message but reject the person; and it is amusing that a theatre that values the "natural" above all should, by going all out for it, lose in the end not only human artifice, but human nature too.

WHAT the living stage is in danger of losing can be seen by a visit to a good puppet show. The jointed, wooden figures, dependent upon wires for all their movements and upon hidden accompanists for all their utterances, are stylists because they cannot help themselves. No matter how variously they may be dressed and painted they have a unity of style, for however skilfully they are towed across a stage, a certain stiffness impedes their naturalness—which is to say, their limitations give style to their movements just as manners and protocol gave style to the movements of courtiers. A puppet cannot be hurried beyond a certain speed without betraying his inhumanity; and this, too, is a happy limitation, in that it obliges the puppet-master to exploit his actor precisely or not at all.

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The limbs of a puppet being detachable opens the door to unlimited farce—and when one sees the heads and arms of puppets flying across the stage, one realises that these civilised little dolls would be exploited as unscrupulously as human actors by their vulgar owners if it were not for their brainlessness and other, blessed, limitations. Puppets, thanks to the very nature of themselves, make unspoken, inflexible demands which must be met: no author can easily give them a message for modern times; no producer can convince them that his own fashionable method of doing something is the very last word in dramatic art. Puppets even demand to be accompanied by strictly-appropriate composers; nothing, for example, will induce them to work with Wagner, whose unbridled romanticism asks too much of their legs. Mendelssohn they can manage very well, having an aptitude for swaying movements and sentimental gestures; but there is no doubt that they are happiest in the world of classical composition, where all is dictated by formality and precision and through which they are able to lead us back to the high severities of the Japanese and Greek theatres. Puppets have been famous for centuries for their playing of harpsichords, pianos, violins, and trumpets; even the slide-trombone can be taken in their stride. But precisely because they are such good instrumentalists, much advantage has often been taken of them, and, in the hands of Italians, they are forced frequently into *opera buffa* in a way that is entirely human and unbecoming. Luminous paints of a garish kind, indefinitely-extensible spring necks, blue-jeans, and the influence of Walt Disney have all helped to corrupt these immaculate little persons, and if ever a means of making them walk properly is found there is no doubt that they will become indistinguishable from living actors and all style lost forever. Many of the male puppets are already tyrannously abused; but the appeal of the long skirt, which hides the jerky stutterings of the feet, is so obvious even to the most ignorant human showman that the future of the lady-puppets is much brighter and they may long continue to recapture the past with an accuracy denied to modern dramatists. Puppets play, of course, on a very small stage that is erected upon the boards of an ordinary stage; seen from the cinders of Rugby they and their stage would seem inordinately small. But this is only an illusion; on leaving the theatre the memory carries away images of life-sized persons, which is again much better than a theatre that starts off with life-sized people but fills the departing memory with recollections of dwarfs. Indeed, any heroic part can always be admirably played by a puppet, since style and heroism, at least on the stage, are inextricably joined; and in the recent production of Podrecca's Piccoli Theatre at the Victoria Palace the puppets showed themselves to perfection even as exponents of bull-fighting. The matador's address to the President, prior to engaging the bull, was a model example of how pride and sobriety commingle in a stage person, and the cries and salutes that greeted each successful pass were no less lusty for being studiedly grandiose. Most of the remainder of the numbers displayed atrociously the vulgarities we have listed above, and yet even they had moments of severity which no amount of degradation and bad script writing could ruin entirely. This would seem to be the difference between the puppet- and the living-stages: no matter how bad the former may be, it is never without style of sorts and, unlike the latter, can never be described as wooden.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Piccadilly and After

THE RECENT fracas about Piccadilly Circus was more than a fuss about a bad bit of architecture. The design of the building proposed for the Monico site, though outrageous enough, was no worse than that of a dozen buildings that have actually gone up in the City and elsewhere every year since the war. The reason the objectors—who have had a resounding success in getting the design turned down—felt so strongly was on account of the planning principle involved. In the course of the public enquiry this and other important issues emerged very clearly, and carry with them lessons that still have to be followed up.

In addition, the very fact that an objection to bad architecture became a *cause célèbre*, and took up so much space in the newspapers, is important in view of the widespread apathy about architecture which is one of the handicaps of those who try to improve it. The Ministry Inspector who held the enquiry said in his report that, had not a crude perspective sketch of the design been issued at a press conference called by Mr. Jack Cotton (the principal promoter) to publicise the scheme in October last year, thus drawing wider attention to its defects than they would otherwise have received, the building would now probably be in course of erection. This underlines the need for continual watchfulness on the part of those who mind about good architecture and civic design, and suggests that there is a case for making it compulsory to exhibit publicly the designs for important new buildings and replanning schemes at an early stage, so that informed opinion can express itself about them before it is too late to be effective.

The London County Council, like all planning authorities confronted with the need for large-scale redevelopment, was in a difficult position over Piccadilly. The L.C.C. is responsible for seeing that new buildings conform to a properly worked-out plan; indeed it had already, some years ago, produced a plan for Piccadilly Circus, in order to demonstrate the need for comprehensive planning on the occasion of any appeal against its refusal to grant planning consent to a piecemeal building project in a different part of the Circus. On the other hand, if a planning authority continues too long to withhold planning consent until a comprehensive plan is agreed to—let alone refuse consent because of the architectural shortcomings of individual projects—it is accused of holding up the redevelopment of the city, of causing sites of high rateable value to remain empty, and so on.

IT WAS IN THE FACE of this difficulty that the L.C.C. got itself into an embarrassing position over the Monico site. It not only gave provisional consent to an isolated building on this one side of the Circus, in contradiction of its previously held view that the Circus must be considered as a whole, but its Architect's Department gave so much help to the promoters of the building in their efforts to give it an acceptable form, that the criticised design was in fact, as it turned out when its authorship was investigated at the enquiry, as much the L.C.C.'s creation as the promoter's. The L.C.C. was thus heard publicly defending the design alongside the building promoters, in spite of being the authority officially responsible for preventing buildings being put up contrary to the public interest.

The L.C.C.'s case was that the provisional consent it had given to the building did not stand in the way of the proper planning of the whole Circus at a later date, a case it failed to make out; and following the Inspector's lucid and unequivocal report, the Minister has insisted on an overall plan being first worked out, and a new design for the Monico site being then prepared to conform with it.

The planning issue was particularly important because unless this was faced the traffic issue could not be faced either. Piccadilly Circus not only provides a social focus for Londoners and visitors to London (hence the strength of the objectors' argument that the quality of new buildings there should not be left to the mercy of the speculative developer); it is also a busy traffic intersection, and without better planning these two roles are bound to conflict with each other. It is being realised more and more that road planning with the sole object of speeding traffic-flow threatens to destroy the very qualities in cities that make them civilised and sociable, and Piccadilly Circus is surely one of the places where the rights of the pedestrian have most claim to be remembered. In a centre like this there should be room to promenade and meet one's friends and to stand and stare at the shops and the lights, or simply at the busy life of London; which means in present-day circumstances not only broad pavements but some

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form of segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The L.C.C. showed its awareness of this in its earlier comprehensive plan: the pavement on the south side was linked to the central island on which *Eros* stands, giving space for open-air cafés and such-like, and the traffic taken behind the buildings along a widened Jermyn Street; more important still, other pavements were lifted high in the air above the level of the traffic, forming first-floor galleries to the various buildings, which were linked by footbridges.

BUT THIS IMAGINATIVE PLAN was tacitly abandoned when consent was given to the Monico building in advance of any concrete scheme for the other buildings round the Circus. No upper-level pedestrian circulation was allowed for, and only 15 feet of pavement space was left between the walls of the building and the thundering traffic. At the enquiry, the L.C.C. itself argued against the practicability of upper-level pedestrian pavements in spite of their presence in its earlier plan. It could only put forward the quite unacceptable idea that much of the pedestrian circulation ought to be underground—an idea incompatible with the social function of Piccadilly Circus, and also, incidentally, with the large display of illuminated advertisements on which the promoters of the Monico building set such store.

The best means of effectively separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic is not easily decided, and some of the arguments brought forward by the L.C.C. were serious ones. But the problem must be solved, and it was rightly deplored at the enquiry that the L.C.C. should have accepted defeat so easily at a time when leases were falling in all round the Circus and when so much of the West End of London (including Coventry Street and Shaftesbury Avenue, adjoining the Circus) were about to be re-built, creating the opportunity for London to set a lead to the world in the far-sighted redevelopment of city centres in terms of modern traffic. The Minister's courageous decision has at least kept that opportunity alive.

The basic issue raised by all these arguments is that of the proper relationship between the planning authority and the property developer.

Our capitalist economy regards private investment as the right way of financing new building, but it is in the nature of private investment to look for the highest profits and to choose for redevelopment only those sites which offer the chance of high profits. The local planning authority can do a little—though for the reasons given already, and because it is itself under all sorts of financial and political pressures, not as much as is desirable—to curb the excesses of developers: prevent them from cramming too much accommodation on the site, using it for an undesirable purpose, and bringing more traffic to it without providing proper access and parking; and it can even do something about their lack of architectural responsibility, though no amount of official prodding can turn the poor architects that property developers generally employ into good ones.

But the planning authority cannot compel private enterprise to re-build on the less profitable sites, which makes the simultaneous re-planning of large areas more difficult. Nor of course is there private money available for undertakings that make no profit at all, such as wider pavement space, sunken traffic-ways, high-level pedestrian walkways, tree-planting, and the like, in spite of the fact that the sites that are most profitable to develop often gain their value from the presence of such amenities, which the financier has done nothing to provide.

THE L.C.C. was justified in complaining that it could not itself furnish the capital to acquire and re-develop the whole Circus, which would have given it the necessary long-term control and in the long run could have proved nearly as good an investment of public money as the present developers expect it to prove for them. It has been suggested that in this special case the Government ought to have provided the capital out of national resources. It may be so, but that would not answer the general need, of which Piccadilly Circus is only one much-publicised example.

The L.C.C. has shown more initiative in other places where it is responsible for comprehensive development, such as the Elephant and Castle and the South Bank; but these are only partially successful in terms of architecture and civic design, and in any case even the most well-intentioned local authorities cannot plan largely enough in view of the way our cities are now dominated by the traffic problem. The most urgent need at the moment is for some way to be found of allying the enterprise that is going into new building with wider civic needs, and this will not be easy within the limitations of Conservative economic policy. Perhaps the most promising means would be some kind of public investment corporation, directly under Government control; perhaps a number of development corporations, like those of the new towns, put in charge of key areas that require comprehensive re-building. There are no doubt other possibilities.

The importance of the Piccadilly Circus episode is that it showed up the weakness of the policy of leaving the central areas of cities to the

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mercies of speculative enterprise, without even an effective long-term plan, in the hope that the public interest would somehow be served at the same time.

J. R. Richards

Letter from Tokyo

Running Riot

THE week centering upon 15th June seemed like the eve of a revolution. Yet nothing went quite as it should have. The stock market rallied. The rioters of 15th June lost their momentum when, on 18th June, their next big day, they did nothing. They then fell into bickering among themselves, and the crisis passed, for the time being at least, on a note of high comedy. The Zengakuren students' union, apparently bilked of funds it had collected in aid of its 15th June heroes, attacked the headquarters of the Communist Party. The Communist secretary-general then denounced the Zengakuren as "a hireling of American imperialism."

And so euphoria has come. It was all part of a great democratic upsurge, that month of snake-dancing and stoning the police and blocking the corridors of the Diet. One wonders what will happen when the cool weather returns and the time comes for more democratic action.

In fact, the Japanese have shown themselves to be very much a part of Asia, and rather remote from the West. The anti-treaty, anti-Eisenhower demonstrations were in large measure a result of the U2 incident and of Khrushchev's remarkable performance in Paris. The sequence of events beginning with U2 probably left the whole world with doubts about American leadership. Europeans, however, saw the Khrushchev tarantella and had a horrid vision of what they were exposed to.

The Japanese intelligentsia, on the other hand, showed how fundamentally uncommitted it is. The Americans were faltering, and in their faltering might bring unpleasantness to other people, and the time had come to think of moving on. Though, as will become apparent later, it is rather a small part of the story, there was an element of expediency in the near-unanimous opposition of the articulate intellectuals to the Kishi government and the revised Security Treaty, and their support of the policy also supported by Moscow and Peking, unarmed neutrality. I am on rather good terms with one of the exceptions, a lady writer who is almost embarrassingly pro-American, and I have heard her discussing with anxious-faced daughters the question of whether she ought not to have more thought for the future. One can hardly blame the daughters. They have children, and nothing to fear from the United States except desertion, and a great deal to fear from the other side if the desertion takes place; and whether it does or does not, a person has done himself no harm by getting ready either with silence or with pro-Chinese utterances. These are simple facts, and they have significance because, in spite of industrialisation, prosperity, and a great love for refined French things and plebeian American things, the Japanese are fundamentally among the non-committed peoples.

In Japan, words are not always tested against objective fact, and the tag "feudal," applied to the young officers of the Thirties and the conservative government to-day, has quite magical results in blinding people to what would seem to be the real, present danger. The government and the police are not above suspicion, to be sure; but the real danger is from highly emotional reformers who are allowed to have their way by force, and from intellectual leaders who apologise for them, as generals apologised for their angry but well-intentioned juniors in the Thirties. Conspicuous among the apologists was Dr. Kaya, the president of Tokyo University, whose statement justifying the student violence of 15th June is ludicrously similar to a statement by General Araki justifying an assassination just two months short of twenty-five years ago. Both gentlemen said that the miscreants were angry, and that we should not reprove them.

THE DISTURBANCES CALL for reflection on the question of mass guilt. We may hope that what happened in the Weimar Republic will never happen again, and that we will never have before our eyes evidence of how people behaved and should have behaved. In Japan much seems to be repeating itself, and one can sit and watch. If disaster comes again and anyone survives, it will be very difficult to accept the explanation one listened to with sympathy in 1945: that the individual was powerless. The near-unanimous (the near-unanimity is the point) intellectual opposition to the government and the Security Treaty in May and June suggests either a want of courage to take an unfashionable stand or a want of insight in examining a problem so complex as to make unanimity almost unthinkable. At the very least it can be said that Dr. Kaya did the easy thing when the difficult thing was far from impossible.

The Japanese intellectual has been charged above with a certain opportunism. There can be no question that it exists—one only has to

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note the discrepancy between what eminent Japanese say in conversation and what they say in print. Much more to the point, however, is what might be described as the intellectual defencelessness of the Japanese.

To-day we find in the intellectuals' ranks nihilists who, on their motor-cycles and in their lavender shirts, piece the moments together without a philosophy; Marxists (including a great many unaware that their world derives from Marx), whose chief enemy is capitalism and who are very suspicious of what the capitalists call "the fight for freedom;" and, fading into the second, nihilists in a second sense, who are automatically doing good with every stone thrown at a feudal policeman, and from whom we may no doubt expect many exciting things in the future, as we had them in the decade-and-a-half before Potsdam.

One does not wish to argue, certainly, that all thinking Japanese fall into one of the three categories. What one can say is that Anglo-Saxon empiricism has provided them with precious few defences against nihilism and Marxism, and that the former has precious few against the latter. When the mainland Chinese finally have their embassy in Tokyo and "Sino-Japanese cultural exchange" gets under way in earnest, the Japanese will be the material the Chinese have always wanted to work with. The Japanese will have many pretty things to show the Chinese but no reason for showing them, beyond a belief that culture is good and exchange is good too. The Chinese will have a reason for every picture they show and every word they print in Japan, and they will have a people with no answer.

How long can this state of affairs continue? We have a country without native intellectual defences, peculiarly vulnerable to secular absolutes, given to civic violence, tending, at its more articulate pole, to be excessively sanguine about the intentions of the Communist world, and particularly China. The prospect is not a bright one. Yet perhaps significant changes can be postponed for rather a long time.

Much depends on whether or not the most valuable lesson from the recent unpleasantness has been learned: that one avoids forcing the Japanese to a decision. Had the Security Treaty been left in its old form, there would have been grumbling, but the nation would not have been asked to do the one thing it will not do, come out as a nation and say that it chooses one bloc over the other. The old treaty was a relic of the Occupation, and the Japanese role in its negotiation was passive. Now the nation was asked to commit itself, and it split itself rather than do so.

If no such decisions are forced in the future, perhaps things will be all right. There will be agitation against American bases, it is true, and particularly for the return of Okinawa, where there are to be elections in the autumn; and the Americans have given the Japanese what they need not have, a crisis to look forward to in ten years' time, when the treaty arrangements are again to be reviewed.

In moments of depression one feels that only inertia has kept Japan on its course these years since the Occupation, and that presently it must go careening over a curve, or come clanking to a stop, and wait for whatever will shock it into motion again. This in moments of depression. At other times one feels that the inertia is a very powerful force, that the road is relatively free of curves and can be kept clear, and that perhaps eventually a sort of negative sense of direction will emerge, a sense not of where the country wants to go but of where it does not want to go. At the very least, one hopes for some awakening to the dangers posed by the New China.

Edward Seidensticker

Letter from Ibadan

Transition Without Tears

THE last Federal elections in Nigeria received a reasonable coverage in the world press, and coming from Ibadan to Europe I am no longer asked whether I am "right in the heart of the Mau-Mau troubles." People with a slight interest in Africa have now heard of Dr. Azikwe and Chief Awolowo and the Sardauna of Sokoto and have a vague idea of what their respective parties stand for. They have hardly any idea, however, with what incredible imagination and resourcefulness elections were fought in the smaller towns and villages of Nigeria where the majority of people are still illiterate.

If I make a brief description of electioneering in a Yoruba town I know it will reveal precious little about Nigerian politics, but it should reveal something, I hope, about the colourful, imaginative personalities of the Nigerians and the flamboyance of West African life.

On one level, of course, elections were fought on a familiar European pattern, and there were election speeches, rallies, public statements, and political programmes and manifestos. The real issues of the election, however, meant little to the average villager. The question of Nigeria's future "foreign policy," for example, does not concern the illiterate farmer who has seldom travelled beyond his village and may never even have seen the Federal capital. For him the election centres round local issues, *e.g.*, rates and chieftaincy disputes; and he is also highly in-

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fluenced by the faces and voices of the local candidates and by their ability to overcome the barriers that have grown between the Westernised literate Nigerian and the bulk of the farming population.

Force and intimidation were occasionally tried during these last elections, but not, I think, with great success. Bands of "hooligans" invaded the provinces from Lagos. They appeared on the night market with matchets, grabbing hold of people and asking menacingly: "What party is yours?" Since nobody could be sure what side the "hooligans" were on, the usual reply was: "My party is the Party of God." Such evasive answers would not always save the unfortunates from a beating. When two groups of "hooligans" of opposing parties met, there were minor battles with a few wounded. This rather confusing and unpleasant situation would be finally resolved by the Chief of the town who called the parties together and persuaded them to campaign on alternative dates. Thus the loaded question "What party is yours?" became harmless and uncomplicated—provided, of course, that one did not get the dates muddled. When army forces were occasionally sent into a town, there was little really for them to do. But they did provide one party organiser with an excellent election stunt. When the military gave a show of force, driving slowly through the town in the heavy lorries, he followed them in a tiny car with a loudspeaker and proclaimed:

"I hope you all realise now that it is wiser to vote for my party! *I* am the one who brought all these soldiers into the town, and I will have everybody arrested who will not vote for us!"

Such little jokes were extremely effective, and they did more to enhance the popularity of a party than more genuine displays of wealth and power. The Action Group used helicopters to travel through the country during the campaign. This was, of course, an ideal means of transport in a country that still has notoriously bad roads, but some Yoruba farmers were suspicious. They had been grumbling about the increasing burden of taxation and when they saw this new and strange machine they tended to say: "So that is what our tax money is being spent on!" And they quickly turned the word into *"elekomità"* which means: "They-gather-us-together-to-sell-us." An equally dubious device was the sky-writing carried out by aeroplanes. When the name of the party leader appeared in huge letters in the sky, enormous crowds of people came to see it, but the older people were extremely doubtful as to what to think of it all, and one old man said to me: "This will be the end of him. He is now climbing into the sky to poke his finger into God's face...."

THE MOST IMPORTANT part of the campaigns, however, was political songs.

West Africa has a long tradition in songs of praise and abuse. In the Yoruba country every person has his own praise names (*oriki*) which will be sung for him or played on the drum on festive occasions. Of great importance, naturally, are the praise names of chiefs and kings. A chief is greeted on certain days not only with his own praise names, but also with the names of all his ancestors: such a recitation can take an hour or more.

In the recent elections the song campaign centred round the election symbols of the two major parties contesting in the South. The symbol of the N.C.N.C. is the cock and the symbol of the Action Group is the palm tree. A regular feature of all N.C.N.C. meetings was the dragging of a young palm tree through the dust; while the climax of all Action Group meetings was the public slaughtering of a cock.

Groups of women supporters danced through the town after meetings singing abusive songs about the opponents' symbol: thus the N.C.N.C. women might sing:

The Palm tree grows in the far bush.
Nobody allows the leper to build his house in the town.
The palm tree grows in the far bush....

To which the Action Group women might reply:

The cock is sweet with rice.
If one could get a little oil
With a little salt
And a couple of onions—
O, the cock is so sweet with rice.

Or again:

Never mind how many cocks there are.
Even twenty or thirty of them will be contained
In a single chicken basket,
Made from the palm tree.

Some of these songs took the threatening form of incantations:

The children of the palm tree live long on this earth.
But the chicken pox will carry off the children of the cock
At a premature age.

To which would come the prompt reply from the N.C.N.C.:

The wives of the palm tree will bear ugly children;
Heavy and prickly like palm fruit.

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Which would be topped again by the Action Group with the following:

If you eat palm oil
And you do not vote for the palm tree—
May palm oil kill you.
If you drink palm oil—
And you do not vote for the palm tree—
May palm oil kill you.
If you use a palm broom
And you do not vote for the palm tree—
May the broom kill you.

Thus the election campaign was turned into an engaging battle of wits. At one stage a third party entered on to the scene, and its symbol was the key. But they were quickly thrown out of the running by the following song which delighted the town:

They do not own a house,
But they have a key!
What could they do with a key,
Except to break into another man's house?

Some of the songs referred to the helicopter. Thus the Action Group song proclaimed:

The hawk soaring in the sky above
Will finish off the chickens one by one.
One by one he will finish them,
The hawk soaring in the sky above.

But the N.C.N.C. would reply:

Awolowo is flying in the helicopter,
Use your votes to bring him down!
Let him fly in the helicopter,
We'll use our votes to bring him down!

The N.C.N.C., in opposition in the Western Region, had a certain advantage in being able to appeal to people's reluctance to pay taxes:

You have forgotten that the election is near.
You still show your greedy red eyes
And make your tax assessment.
You have forgotten that the election is near.

The Action Group women, on the other hand, had a song in which the N.C.N.C. was reminded that the powers of government could have been used to repress them, but that Chief Awolowo had refrained from doing so:

Awolowo,
You have yourself to blame,
You are the owner of the knife,
But you did not kill the cock;
You have yourself to blame.

THE DUEL OF SONGS AND WITS also involved Nigeria's professional musicians, though the professionals did not always come out in support of only one party. There are two types of Yoruba music which are played in small bars and clubs and at marriages and other festivities. The *Abalabi* orchestra consists of a guitar and several drums. Its music shows South American influence, but this has been completely assimilated to the Yoruba style. The *Sakara* orchestra consists of a talking drum and several gourd rattles. Sakara music makes use of Muslim Northern influences, but again these have been turned into a new form of Yoruba music. Both these relatively modern orchestras have retained certain elements of traditional Yoruba music. The most important of these are the use of the traditional talking drum and the habit of spontaneous praise singing. As soon as an important man enters the bar or assembly, the singer weaves his praise names into his songs and the man thus addressed is expected to press some coins on to the singer's forehead. (Everybody should be able to see how much was given: presents are never given discreetly in Yoruba country.)

Political parties were quick to make use of these orchestras. Famous singers were paid high wages to play at party rallies. Party supporters entering a bar would naturally pay the singer to praise their own party. Musicians were often placed in a delicate position when money was forthcoming from supporters of opposing parties and the singer would have to decide when he had worked off a pound's worth of praise for one side and time had come to start singing on behalf of the others.

However, the singers were also quick to see their advantage in the situation; soon the record market was flooded with political records which were usually bought up quickly by the public. Popular political records that went out of stock usually fetched, second-hand, double or more the original price.

There were, of course, singers with political affiliations who strictly serenaded for one party. But some of the best and most popular singers remained aloof and insisted on praising either party as the occasion arose. There is a famous record by the much-loved Sakara band leader Aká: he praises Chief Awolowo on one side and Adegoke Adelabu (the late N.C.N.C. leader from Ibadan) on the other:

AWOLOWO

You the palm tree party men,
Look after Awolowo for me.
Awolowo the father of conquerors.
The lion who has urine to catch the small animals.[1]
Awolowo is cold water,
But he burns the body like fire.
Awolowo, I greet you!
There is nobody who will say

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That Ogun[2] has no power in this world.
If Awolowo speaks and somebody snubs him—
He will create trouble for himself!
Your party has a beautiful name:
Afeniferi!—Those who like all to be happy.
There are many people nowadays, who have no cloth to wear.
But now I hear, that they are all buying land
And that they are building fine houses,
All those who join your party.
The name of your party is a true name:
Those who like all to be happy.
Awolowo is in Nigeria with the Action Group.
He likes everybody to be rich.
That is why the palm tree party grows higher and higher.
Awolowo—let them abuse you!
Abuse can even be honourable—
Because anybody who has good luck,
Will be abused by envious people.
Awolowo—continue with your programme!
It will be good for you and me.

I am surely a palm tree,
I am not a miserable coco-yam,
There is no tree in the forest that can challenge
The superiority of the palm tree.
If the tortoise is tired,
Its shell will never be tired.
If the porcupine is tired,
Its spines will never be tired.
Nobody can afford to become the enemy of water!
I have said it:
All the tricks of your enemies,
We know them all.

ADELABU

The death of Adelabu never pleased anybody at all.[3]
Because those who were pleased with his death
Could never have dared to say so.
When Adelabu died,
He left behind his voice.
So that when the eye misses the eye,
The voice shall never be missed in Ibadan.
You see the children of the father—
But only when they speak will you know
Whether they are true children.
The children of Ibadan never forgot their agreement.
They said: rather than walk backwards
The crab will break his legs.[4]
Before Adelabu died, it was the cock
That captured all the seats in Ibadan.
If you forget Adelabu after his death,
You will be like a man who enters a lorry
And forgets his load.
If the dead could know what is happening behind their backs,
Adelabu would rise up on election day!
The cock shall conquer all the seats.
May God abide with the cock,
Don't let the N.C.N.C. *perish.*
Let us overpower them!
Don't let our honour retreat!
People of Ibadan, and people of Egba!
The party in Lagos—and many other towns
We cannot mention; assemble together!
Let those who scorn you be ashamed.
You must let them understand
That the Ayo game has been won,[5]
The N.C.N.C. *will never be tired!*

THE MOST NIGERIAN FEATURE in the election campaigns was the use of *Egungun* masqueraders. The Egungun society is one of the oldest and most sacred institutions of the traditional Yoruba community. The cult members establish the link between the living and the dead. Famous and powerful ancestors are personified by colourful masks in a dance in the town on certain festival days. These masks are sacrosanct and touching them meant, not so long ago, death. It is characteristic of Yoruba society, however, that even this most awe-inspiring cult has its light-heartedness. There are other Egungun masks which do not represent the powerful ancestors of important lineages but whose main function is to entertain. These masks, known as *"Agbe Igi Jo"* (We-take-wood-to-dance), usually represent caricatures of Europeans, Hausa men, and certain stock characters like policemen and prostitutes (always appearing together). Within this group of masks there is much scope for amusement, social criticism, and acrobatic performances. All kinds of animals (monkeys, leopards, crocodiles) figure among these masks; lately there have been masks representing Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. I do not know which political party had the idea first, but now there are periodical appearances of Egunguns representing the spirit of the Action Group or the spirit of the N.C.N.C. The acrobatic dances of the masks are very popular, and now in the sacred verse form of the ancient masquerade cult there is conveyed a topical political message. For some (mostly outsiders) it would seem to be a confounding of the sacred and the profane, or a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous. For others it was a hopeful African lesson in transition without tears, or how to take to democracy with a smile.

Ulli Beier

[1] There is a popular story that the lion catches animals by drawing a huge circle with urine in the bush. He then stands in the middle and roars. The animals try to escape, but as soon as they touch the lion's urine they drop down dead.
[2] Ogun is the Yoruba god of war.
[3] Adelabu, the popular N.C.N.C. politician who died in a car accident.
[4] The West African crab always moves sideways.
[5] Ayo game, a Yoruba game of skill.

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In the Suburban House

By Peter Wilmott & Michael Young

IN THE Bethnal Green of 1956 most people still lived in houses owned by others; men were only just beginning to paper their walls and whitewash the lavatories in their back-yards. Yet they were reluctant to undertake any repairs or improvements: they regarded these as the responsibility of the landlord much more readily than he did himself. In Greenleigh, the estate of brand-new houses to which Bethnal Greeners were moved, we saw the access of the "house-centred" spirit, as we called it.

The third stage is Woodford where the privately-owned houses show every sign of the attention which is lavished on them. Whatever has happened to the family in the last century, these houses almost suggest that, as far as buildings go, one has slipped back into pre-industrial England. Antiquity is always there even in the estate agent's advertisements.

WOODFORD GREEN
IMPOSING MODERN SEMI-DETACHED PROPERTY WITH BOLD HALF-TIMBERED FRONTAGE

The elevation is in brick, rough cast and half timber with overhanging mellowed tiles between the seven Tudor style bay windows. The accommodation comprises a ground floor SQUARE SEMI-LOUNGE *with delf rack and coved ceiling, etc.*

Each house is a miniature history of architecture. Victorian houses suggest the mediæval by their gabled roofs and their oriel-like windows; and recall Athens or Venice through marble pillars with decorated capitals. Archaism is at its more bizarre in the semi-detached, pebble-dashed villas built since 1918. Many have bay windows with mullioned panes; many represent half-timbering by creosoted lathes nailed to brick fronts; some have front doors encased in Norman arches. The houses privately built after 1945 express the same hankering for the first Elizabeth and for earlier times by stained "Cathedral" glass which is used for the top halves of doors and in the round windows of halls and lavatories.

Behind the Tudor exteriors the men are working hard to modernise the interiors. It was sometimes difficult to find any times when they could manage to see us, they were so busy. Here, for example, is what three members of our sample were doing when we finally pinned them down on Saturdays and Sundays in the autumn of 1959.

> Mr. Day, when called upon, said he had been putting together two sheds at the bottom of his garden so that he could have a larger workshop for his bench. It would be useful when he came to put in the central heating system he was planning for the coming winter.
>
> Mr. Adams, with obvious pride, explained that he had been knocking down the fireplace and chimney breast in a bedroom which was not needed now that he had installed electric storage heaters throughout. He had recently filled in a pond in his garden so that he could have more room for vegetables.
>
> Mr. Jackson, in his overalls, remarked: "We're all do-it-yourself people in our family. Since we moved in we've stripped down all the paintwork and re-done it in a lighter brown. Now I'm changing the hot-water system around. I've moved the cistern so that it doesn't stick out any more."

For these three, and most other owner-occupiers, their houses provide almost endless opportunities for work. Each step is discussed in detail with the wife. She does not normally have to do anything. Her role is rather to admire her husband's skill and, occasionally, if a son is not at home, to stand at the bottom of a ladder handing up his power-tool, a pail of size or a box of Rawlplugs.

Why this preoccupation with the house? The first and most obvious reason is sheer pride of ownership. A man who buys his own house has a tiny but independent estate of which he is the undisputed manager. "I like to be the boss of my own walk," as one of them said. He can identify himself with his house and feel that as he improves it he is also in a sense adding to his

Peter Wilmott and Michael Young, after their study "Family and Kinship in East London", have been studying the behaviour of middle-class families in the suburb of Woodford. Here are some of their conclusions, which deal with the behaviour of "owner-occupiers."

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own stature, in the eyes of his wife and children, his neighbours and himself.

> "They're all owner-occupiers around here. They've all bought their houses on a mortgage and they take a pride in running a property and keeping up the appearance of their house and garden."

A second reason is that the house, particularly if old rather than new, is an opportunity both for expressing his æsthetic sense and for using and developing the capacities of a craftsman. The work of the day, in office or factory, may be becoming more and more boring not for the executives we mentioned earlier who hire builders instead of being them, but as their work gets more specialised, for their employees. To compensate for this, the work of the night or week-end may be becoming psychologically more and more rewarding as it gets more generalised, more skilled, and more creative.

The third reason is that the house is regarded as a sort of business. Economic calculation goes like this. Buying your own house actually saves money in the long run. "To rent is a waste of money—you get nothing back." "If you're buying a house you're saving at the same time. You're not paying out rent and nothing to show for it—you've got something to show for it at the end." Interest and amortisation on a mortgage may be a good deal higher than rent for similar accommodation—if you could get it. But you do have the satisfaction of knowing that the difference is helping to give you an asset for your old age or (where the mortgage is supported by an insurance policy) for your wife and children should you not last as long as the mortgage.

You then work out how much money you are saving by doing your own work instead of getting builders to do it for you. "I got an estimate for a decorating job recently, just to see what it would cost, and they wanted £34. Folks don't get that much money these days, not middle-class folk anyway. Only working-class people do." Mr. Prior demonstrated at once his business acumen and his sense of class superiority. And finally you estimate how much you have augmented the value of the property by your expenditure of labour, skill, and money. Another husband was so sure of himself that when he changed jobs recently he took eight months' holiday, lived on his savings, and made an "investment" in his house. He knocked walls down to make larger rooms, he re-built and re-equipped the kitchen with a steel sink unit, built-in cupboards and Marley tiles, he erected a garage and a conservatory screened by blue venetian blinds. Looking on it purely as a commercial proposition, let alone anything else, he was very well satisfied with results. "I made these vast improvements and now I hope to make at least £1,000 on the property if it's sold." Owners notice the selling prices of nearby houses—knowledge of these often circulates freely up and down the road. They know that, provided they maintain it in good condition, the value of their asset is increasing. Add on a bit extra for improvements, and they can at the end feel very content with their one-man business.

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A Lost American Masterpiece?

By Marcus Cunliffe

MARK TWAIN'S (Samuel Clemens') autobiography is one of the putative great books of American literature—and there are not so many masterpieces in the canon that we can afford to neglect possible additions to the list. His stock as an American author stands extremely high. *Huckleberry Finn* indeed *has* joined the list of masterpieces. It is being appraised with a gravity that would have amazed those of Twain's contemporaries who dismissed it as vulgar or superficial. *Life on the Mississippi*, though not taken quite so seriously, is much admired. *Pudd'nhead Wilson* has been warmly and plausibly commended by Professor Fiedler and Dr. Leavis. Other critics have discovered interesting complexities in *A Connecticut Yankee*, not to mention *The Mysterious Stranger*. And so on.

We are ready then to pay close attention to Twain's autobiography, whether or not we may be acquainted with its curious publishing history. Twain himself believed it to be a work of extraordinary importance. His most recent editor thinks it is "a classic of American letters, to be ranked with the autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin and Henry Adams." And in fact one could without too much effort convince oneself that it ought to be, not simply *a* great American book but *the* great American book. Twain wrote (or dictated) most of the manuscript late in life. Some portions appeared in periodicals of the day. But these, he considered, were the relatively mild and printable portions. The rest was composed for posthumous publication:

> I speak from the grave rather than with my living tongue for a good reason: I can speak thence freely. When a man is writing a book dealing with the privacies of his life—a book which is to be read while he is still alive—he shrinks from speaking his whole frank mind; all his attempts to do it fail; he recognises that he is trying to do a thing which is wholly impossible to a human being.... It has seemed to me that I could be as frank and free and unembarrassed as a love letter if I knew that what I was writing would be exposed to no eye until I was dead, and unaware and indifferent.

This is reminiscent of Whitman's intention in *Leaves of Grass*—"to put *a Person*, a human being (myself, in the latter half of the 19th century, in America), freely, fully, and truly on record." We recall how many American masterpieces or near-misses have in essence been autobiographical. They belong to no easily definable genre, but are aspects of the First Person Singular. Perhaps the long search for the Great American Novel is chimerical because the wrong kind of book is being sought. Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, Henry Adams, and a dozen others, including Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, E. E. Cummings, Thomas Wolfe: is not their real theme Myself-in-America: the Great American Bafflement, Search, Initiation, Let-Down?

And here is Twain, whose subject so often was himself or himself at one remove, the perfecter of that American colloquial style which seems in its artful artlessness a direct transcript of actual talk; fascinated by the notion of a deliberately "systemless system" of narration and determined that "it shall be read and admired a good many centuries because of its form and method;" Twain committed to telling the whole truth, and relishing the shock his revelations will bring. What might we not expect of such a witness?

What we get is not a great deal. That has been suspected ever since the first version of the *Autobiography* came out in 1924. Edited in two volumes by A. B. Paine, Twain's accredited biographer, it seemed a ragbag of Twainiana, some delightful, some trivial, but none of it startling. Above all, it was shapeless; the editor respected Twain's wish and printed passages in order of composition, an order that bore little relation to the sequence of events they describe. Still, there were sizeable fragments that Paine was either not permitted or did not choose to print. Could these conceal the missing great book?

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A number were incorporated in a second, selective edition by Bernard DeVoto, *Mark Twain in Eruption* (1940). DeVoto's excerpts gave a coherent picture of Twain the pessimistic democrat, funny almost despite himself ("The ... periodical and sudden changes of mood in me, from deep melancholy to half-insane tempests and cyclones of humour, are among the curiosities of my life"), hurling maledictions at Theodore Roosevelt, at such robber barons as Jay Gould, and at the various publishers whom he unfairly accused of swindling him. But the result was not very important as literature; and though it was welcomely tidy and well-edited, Mark Twain's views were made a little *too* tidy. For example, there are some harsh words on trusts and millionaires, but DeVoto does not reproduce the nice things Twain also said about Standard Oil and its tycoon H. H. Rogers.

THE DWINDLING HOPE that there might yet be at least a fraction of a masterpiece remaining in manuscript has been dissipated by the third version of the *Autobiography*, Mr. Charles Neider's. His has the distinct merit of arranging the material in a rough chronological sequence, so that we begin at the beginning ("I was born the 30th of November, 1835, in the almost invisible village of Florida, Monroe County, Missouri") and end in 1909 with the sudden death, four months before his own, of Twain's epileptic daughter, Jean. Mr. Neider also has been selective, leaving out some of the vituperation in DeVoto and some of the minutiæ in Paine. He has tried to assemble the passages of most direct literary and autobiographical interest. According to his own rather vague count he has, in addition to raiding Paine and DeVoto and the old magazine sources, included 30,000 to 40,000 words which have not hitherto been published. This strikes me as an over-generous estimate, even at the lower figure. I may be wrong. It may be just that I *feel* I have read nearly all of the book before. The volume depresses me, as the end of the trolley-line, the final reading of the will in which none of the bequests is a surprise. A less casual editor than Mr. Neider might have turned the matter to good account by seizing upon the book's many elements of real interest—by helping the reader, for instance, to distinguish between what is genuine and what fictitious in Mark Twain's repertoire of comic incidents: to distinguish, that is, between Mark Twain and Samuel L. Clemens. Mr. Neider's introduction and his selections fashion a more jolly, wholesome Twain than that proffered by DeVoto. He has a case. Yet one cannot help feeling that Paine's shapeless miscellany comes nearer than these two to the full, vagarious run of Twain's mind, to the inspired anarchy of his method of composition. But whichever edition one prefers, the masterpiece is not there.

OF COURSE the book is readable; Twain's prose is never inert. Bits of it are very funny; one laughs out aloud at the slapstick of half-a-dozen episodes. Other bits are touching; all through lies an old man's desolate awareness of mortality, an awareness brought heavily home to him by the death of his much-loved wife and two of his three daughters. There are many references to death, violence, and dread in his Missouri boyhood; he is at least half in earnest in his reiterated comment that a Presbyterian upbringing gave him an insomniac conscience; and there are occasional agonies of self-blame:

> Our first child ... lived twenty-two months. I was the cause of the child's illness. ... I took him for a long drive in an open barouche. ... It was a raw, cold morning but he was well wrapped about with furs and, in the hands of a careful person, no harm would have come to him.

Twain was careless and let the furs fall away:

> The child was almost frozen. ... I was aghast at what I had done and feared the consequences. I have always felt shame for that treacherous morning's work and have not allowed myself to think of it when I could help it. I doubt if I had the courage to make confession at that time. I think it most likely that I have never confessed until now.

No doubt the device of a posthumous autobiography enabled Twain to disburden himself of guilt like this, though nowhere else does he so ruthlessly incriminate himself. He was, too, convinced—without justification—that his rather elementary brand of determinism would appal mankind, and had best be kept from it for a while. He must have enjoyed blowing off steam in private about people such as Marie Corelli whom he strongly disliked. But there was nothing truly secret or fresh that he was hoarding for posterity.

What then did he think he was doing? In part, talking to himself, a successful old man who did not need to earn any more money within the immediate future but who had the lifelong habit of writing *something*. Also, posthumous publication appealed to him as a device. There was a practical consideration, in that he might prolong copyright by spreading the posthumous material among works already published. But his fancy was caught by the stunt of a voice-from-the-tomb. It would be one more of his ingenious plots, one more of Mark Twain's audacities.

We can see admirably in the *Autobiography* the operation of Twain's professional instinct. Sometimes the mechanism is too nakedly

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apparent. Twain cannot stop it; we are half-moved, half-horrified to watch how he develops the pathetic little domestic conspiracies that surround his wife's death-bed into a humorous dialogue. And one of his cherished professional techniques is that of the finely calculated affront, the seeming blunder which he compels into a triumph. When it fails, as in the isolated instance of the Whittier dinner of 1877, he is mortified and miserable. Usually it succeeds, as in the lecture which he begins with a stale joke that he keeps on repeating until the embarrassed audience suddenly grasps the intention and explodes with laughter:

> It revived me, and I needed it, for if I had had to tell it four more times I should have died—but I would have done it, if I had had to get somebody to hold me up. The house kept up that crash for a minute or two, and it was a soothing and blessed thing to hear.
>
> Mr. [James Russell] Lowell shook me cordially by the hand and said, "Mark, it was a triumph of art! It was a triumph of grit, too. I would rather lead a forlorn hope and take my chances of a soldier's bloody death than try to duplicate that performance."

This is an audacity of *technique*: so, mainly, was to be the posthumous autobiography. Audacity of *subject*—mentioning the unmentionable, instead of skirmishing around it—was something else. He had no thought of Whitmanesque revelations. As a conversation with Elinor Glyn reveals, Twain drew a sharp distinction between what people were like and what society falsely presumed them to be. It was also for him, however, though not for the bolder Miss Glyn (bolder Miss Glyn!), a distinction between what one might say in private and what could be put in print—even from beyond the grave.

For two reasons, the *Autobiography* could not have been a masterpiece. The first is that the author's intention was flawed. His reminiscences are in part though not entirely the product of Samuel Clemens as "Mark Twain:" that is, as Twain the platform performer, the after-dinner speaker, the practical joker, mischievous and slightly disingenuous, the expert of the harmless minor shock. This side of him reminds us of those little shops that display boxes of itching powder, card-tricks, rubber snakes, artificial flies on artificial lumps of sugar. Half-believing that he *has* told all, this Twain is the prisoner of his own legend, the impresario of the gimmick. If he were alive to-day we could imagine him active in a paperback publishing firm, vastly amused by misleading covers. How he would have loved to bamboozle the public, for example, into buying the novels of Jane Austen or Henry James in the guise of scandalous literature. We can see the cover of his own *Autobiography*, sanctioned by himself: a half-dressed woman (Marie Corelli or Elinor Glyn?), and the words "FRANK . . . AS A LOVE LETTER."

The second and more important reason is that though Clemens' best work—*Huckleberry Finn* and some chapters of *Life on the Mississippi*—is deeply autobiographical, it depends on a combination of personal knowledge, nostalgic emotion, and narrative detachment. In those books he is at two removes from his material, and even in them he stumbles now and then, losing his direction. In other books, including *Innocents Abroad* and *Roughing It* which brought him fame, he is at only one remove. He is not Huck, nor Clemens the boy and youth, but the pseudonymous Mark Twain, inventing a role for himself. With the years he perfected the role. This Mark Twain is sassy, cynical, dry, lovably fallible. Or he was when the world first met him. Since then the *persona* has been adopted by countless humorists who assail us with their improbable minor disasters. There is a large cousinage, from Jerome K. Jerome to the whimsical confessions of Robert Lynd and the writers of "delicious middles." Mark Twain is not to blame for them all. But we have now had too many chances to see how the mechanism moves. And in the *Autobiography* the contrived

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Mark Twain comes continually between the reader and the original Clemens. Even Clemens, when now and then we think we discern him behind Twain, is less vital than their creation *Huckleberry Finn*. Twain/Clemens tells us that the prototype of Huck, a boy named Tom Blankenship, grew up to be a justice of the peace in Montana. How improbable: how impossible! The fact is fascinating in its way, but we push it aside. Finn's is the real voice, still speaking from the river; and Twain/Clemens reaches us in far fainter and more equivocal accents.

Melodramatic Affair

The Man Who Would Be God. By HAAKON CHEVALIER. *Jonathan Cape.* 21s.

THERE is more fiction in reality than there is reality in this work of fiction.

Six years ago, from April 12th to May 6th, 1954, the case of J. Robert Oppenheimer was heard before a Personnel Security Board of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Officially, the hearings were an enquiry to determine whether Dr. Oppenheimer, who was then a consultant to the A.E.C., should or should not have access to classified material. In fact, as everybody knew, the enquiry was a political trial. To-day, these hearings read like pages out of Kafka. Everybody, even his enemies, testified that Dr. Oppenheimer was absolutely loyal; yet he was dismissed as a "security risk." At the end of the war, he had received the Medal of Merit as reward for exceptionally meritorious service "in the development of the greatest military weapon of all time, the atom bomb." Now, in times of peace, he was found wanting on the scales of political justice calibrated by fear and cowardice.

The most damning piece of evidence against Dr. Oppenheimer was his friendship with Haakon Chevalier. Here even those who defended him demurred, because "the Chevalier incident involved temporary concealment of an espionage attempt and admitted lying, and is inexcusable."* This is what happened: In early 1943, Chevalier was asked by George Eltenton, a Communist labour leader in San Francisco, to approach Dr. Oppenheimer "about the possibility of transmitting technical information to Soviet scientists." Dr. Oppenheimer flatly refused, saying "this sounded very wrong to him"; and that was the end of a brief conversation in the kitchen. The incident came to light when Dr. Oppenheimer reported it, of his own accord, in August 1943. He warned the authorities about Eltenton, but refused to name Chevalier. When he was pressed for details he invented what he later called a "cock-and-bull story": this involved several approaches, hints of microfilming, and channels to the Soviet Consulate. A few months later (in December 1943) he admitted that this story was "pure fabrication" and divulged the name of Chevalier. When asked why he had lied, he replied that he had done so in order to protect his friend. This was odd because the cock-and-bull story seemed to involve Chevalier much more deeply in an espionage network than the truth. Yet during the enquiry of 1954, Dr. Oppenheimer testified again, "I still think of Chevalier as a friend."

Now the friend has published a novel, a *roman à clef*. Unfortunately, the key does not open any new doors; and that is the most disappointing thing about it. Mr. Chevalier is a well-known and very competent translator (and this is not said disparagingly, because such a skill is to be rated highly); he is not a novelist. Perhaps *The Man Who Would Be God* is no worse than the average novel of the month; it's no better, either. Thus it is a pity that Mr. Chevalier chose to write a novel; for a novel, as he explains, is "a work of the imagination," and though this work "confessedly has its point of departure in reality," fiction must not be mistaken for the truth. In other words, as a novel the work has no documentary value. It does not pretend to deal with truth on the ordinary level of reality. At the same time, an average novel is the product of an average imagination; and the average imagination hardly reveals new dimensions of truth. Thus *The Man Who Would Be God* falls flat; it is neither a historical document nor an imaginative break-through into a dimension of symbolic truth beyond the public record. In fact, the official record is a much more subtle, complex, and fascinating document. It reveals much more than Mr. Chevalier's novel does about the private drama and the public farce that were acted out in this celebrated case.

In the novel, the portrait of the scientist conforms to a conventional stereotype. He is Sebastian Bloch, a brilliant young physicist who is drawn first into working for Communist causes and then into making the bomb. He has

* From the dissent by Henry De Wolf Smyth, the only member of the A.E.C. to vote against the majority decision. On the Security Board, Dr. Ward V. Evans wrote a memorable dissent. Perhaps it should be remembered that this incident, as well as practically all of the incriminating information against Dr. Oppenheimer, was in the hands of the F.B.I. and the A.E.C. in 1947. He then received full and final clearance.

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a powerful intellect and great personal charm, and these win him the loyalty of friends and the favour of women. But the intellect is double-edged: it also begets pride (and pride goeth, etc., etc.). "You have become inhuman," his wife tells him as they separate. Thus, in the end, intellectual *hubris* cuts him off from human love and the community of man, which he set out to serve as a Communist.

His best friend is Mark Ampter; and here Mr. Chevalier has come up with a fictional surprise. Ampter is an agent of the F.B.I. The drama which develops is that he becomes Bloch's friend while on an official assignment to spy upon Bloch. Eventually, Ampter leaves the F.B.I. because he cannot endure this life of deceit and duplicity. The treatment of the Eltenton episode is cut from the same cloth. In the novel, this is not an espionage approach at all, but a trap laid down by an ambitious F.B.I. chief who is using Ampter as an innocent victim to catch Bloch in an act of treason. Now if true, this would give quite a sensational twist to the case of "Sebastian Bloch"; but as a leap of the creative imagination, it is, I think, rather crude.

Perhaps there was nothing more to reveal; perhaps the lesson is simply the old story that for every bomb you make you pay a price. But if so, the official record again probes much more deeply than the novel into the harassment and humiliation inflicted upon Dr. Oppenheimer during his rise to fame. If he was politically naïve in joining Communist causes before he worked for the government, he was also, it seems, surprisingly naïve in not realising what he was up against as a member of the power élite in the government. Once the F.B.I. got hold of his case, there was no end to the indignities he had to endure in order to do the job that made him famous; and once his enemies saw an opening to strike back, they had no scruples to do so.

Fortunately, times have changed: six years later, McCarthy is dead, and even Hollywood is trying to recover from the disgrace of the political black-lists. Dr. Oppenheimer has found a home in Princeton; Mr. Chevalier, in Paris. Thus the episode was not a tragedy, but a melodrama. Behind the mountain of words and the soul-searching testimony at the Oppenheimer hearings, behind the high-flown principles invoked with passionate intensity, behind the headlines and the publicity—behind this vast apparatus mobilised for the purpose of "guarding the nation's security," there was ultimately —nothing (or, at most, the "Chevalier incident" of 1943).

Six years later, even the "villain of the piece" has come to grief as a fitting climax to the melodrama; for, not so long ago, President Eisenhower nominated Admiral Lewis S. Strauss to be Secretary of Commerce. The Senate conducted its customary hearings and turned the nomination down. Again, the hearings, headlines, the parade of witnesses, and the battery of violent charges and counter-charges were an elaborate melodramatic ritual. For everybody knew what was going on behind the scenes: the Admiral was getting his reward for the stupid and brutal way in which, as chairman of the A.E.C., he had handled the case of J. Robert Oppenheimer. A majority of Americans seemed to feel rather good about it; at least, it's nice to think so.

Hans Meyerhoff

Nobody's Uncle

The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin. Volume One: Trade Union Leader 1881–1940. By Alan Bullock. Heinemann. 50s.

Alan Bullock is a biographer in the Victorian manner: solid, accurate, exhaustive. There is no showing-off by the author, and no amateur psycho-analysis. The record is left to speak for itself; and if the result is sometimes pedestrian, that is how it was for Bevin. Though Bullock admires Bevin as much as he detested his previous theme, Hitler, this difference of feeling has not produced any difference of treatment. Bevin, like Hitler, is presented from "outside," as a public figure. *"Life"* and *"Times"* merge into each other after the first few pages. Alan Bullock stands "outside" Bevin in another sense. He is not a Trade Unionist, or even a member of the Labour movement. This detachment has its advantages. No living writer could have presented a fairer, or more informative account of Bevin's life. But detachment has its own disadvantages. Bullock, being on the outside, has failed to realise how much Bevin was on the outside too. The reader is made to feel—from the sub-title on—that Bevin was a characteristic Labour leader of the early 20th century. In fact he was unique for good and ill, a strange, solitary character, self-made in career and, still more, in ideas.

Bevin was a man without roots or background. Father unknown; left to fend for himself at the age of eight; never acquiring a craft or skill. He remained all his life a casual labourer, ready to turn his hand to anything and without much

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belief in the trained expert. An engine-driver or a maker of precision-tools would never have challenged the bankers as ruthlessly as Bevin did at the time of the Macmillan Commission. He would have been taken in by them and assumed that, as experts, they knew what they were talking about. Bevin, the casual labourer, always knew better than the experts, and often with justification. But there were many things he did not know. He knew little or nothing of industrial England. Bristol, where he grew up, was an isolated pocket of urbanism in a rural sea; and even as a town it was a backwater in Bevin's time. In a curious way, Bevin did not know anything about the Industrial Revolution. The transport and general workers whom he organised could all have existed just as well without it, except for the bus-drivers who depended on the internal-combustion engine. Bevin dealt with docks, and transport undertakings, with hotels and restaurants. He never dealt with factories or engineering-shops. Alan Bullock quotes Bevin's favourite saying: "I like to create." This was the one thing he never did. The members of his Unions were moving things about, not creating them. Even when Bevin drew up schemes for European co-operation, they were the dreams of a trader, not of a creator. There was something lacking in a Labour leader who knew a little of industry and nothing of the north of England.

It is easy to see what Bevin lacked. He lacked comradeship, the unconscious solidarity which the Labour movement represented. Of course there was plenty of spite and intrigue in the Labour movement, as I daresay there is even in the Church of Rome or the Communist Party. The pull of comradeship was strong all the same. That is why the open breach with MacDonald was such a misery and a torment in 1931. But not for Bevin. He always treated the Labour movement as his personal property. The members of his Union were for him "my people." He did great things for them, but in the feudal way that a duke might look after his retainers. "Loyalty" was the great cause which Bevin preached; it is a feudal word. If anyone was disloyal—that is, went against Bevin—then no consideration of comradeship could save him. Ben Tillett was no doubt a tippling old bore when Bevin drove him out of the Presidency of the Union. All the same, no other Labour leader would have been so merciless. Lansbury and Bevin had worked together for years on the board of the *Daily Herald*. Did this deter Bevin when he marched up to denounce Lansbury for hawking his conscience round the Labour movement? It did not. The delegates to the Conference voted for Bevin and against Lansbury; but there was not one who, in his heart, would not

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have liked to be Lansbury and none who wanted to be Bevin.

Bevin was solitary in another, even more significant way. He played politics by ear, and with total disregard of ordinary patterns. He often displayed a dislike of intellectuals. This made him popular with the English upper classes who also dislike intellectuals; and I suspect that Alan Bullock gets some pleasure from the way in which Bevin slammed the impractical theorists. Yet Bevin was not really, to borrow his own phrase, a guileless practical man. He was a rival intellectual, playing the same game but with rules of his own. His mind ran over with cock-eyed ideas; and his rambling talk, if taken down, could have gone alongside Hitler's *Table Talk* as an intellectual curiosity. Bevin could never have had a two-volume *Life* or won the admiration of the Foreign Office if he had stuck to trade-union organisation. It was his chaos of dynamic ideas which made him count in British politics. He saw things which his more humdrum colleagues missed. Often he saw aright. He appreciated earlier and more clearly than others the futility of a non-revolutionary General Strike; though it is fair to add that he saw through the General Strike more quickly because he had believed in it more passionately. This was a typical intellectual's change of front which would not have disgraced Crossman: all for the General Strike one day, dead against it the next. Bevin transformed the emphasis of Trade Union action from strikes to negotiation; and no man used the new method to better effect. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Bevin laid the foundations of the Welfare State. But, lacking a theory or any general conception, he left the Labour movement in the bewilderment over the Welfare State which still bedevils it. He prided himself on never reading a book. Perhaps he was lucky to escape Marx; but if he had read William Morris, or even Ruskin, we should not now be in such confusion.

Bevin had also the intellectual's consuming interest in foreign affairs. He became the appointed negotiator for the Trade Unions—Labour's Foreign Secretary—as early as the Councils of Action in 1920. Again he played by ear; and he played alone. Once more it was exchange of goods, access to raw materials, which interested him. These were the obsessions of a transport-man; and they produced strange results. Intellectuals said many silly things between the wars. Did any intellectual say anything sillier than this: "The old Austro-Hungarian Empire was economically perhaps the soundest thing that existed in Europe"? The Empire was a device by which Magyar landlords and German capitalists exploited oppressed populations; yet Bevin took it as his example in 1937. He was always dreaming of vast Free Trade areas, sometimes for the Commonwealth, sometimes for Europe, without any thought how they contradicted each other. He once wrote to Cole: "Really, old man, look how you have boxed the compass." In fact, Cole erred, if at all, from rigidity of principle; it was Bevin who boxed the compass at a moment's notice, and, when he changed, everyone had to follow him.

Bevin's obsession with trade also made him exaggerate the efficacy of economic sanctions; just as he treated the League of Nations as the Transport and General Workers' Union on a larger scale. His denunciation of Lansbury at the Labour Party Conference of 1935 was the highlight of Bevin's pre-war career. Lansbury's pacifism has been dismissed as impractical. Was Bevin's line any better? This sane, practical man committed himself to the extraordinary proposition that Baldwin's Government could be relied on to support the League of Nations against Mussolini. Lansbury seems a monument of common-sense in comparison to this. Bevin battered down opposition. He won; he did not persuade. Men feared him; some admired him. But few felt for him the affection that they felt for Arthur Henderson—a man of equally impec-

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cable working-class origin, who rose as high but by less ruthless methods. Bevin had many great qualities. He had one great defect: nobody called him Uncle.

A. J. P. Taylor

Intellectual Communists

Communism and British Intellectuals. By Neal Wood. *Gollancz.* 21s.

"It might be said that the *raison d'être* of the Communist Party of Great Britain is the search for the breaking point of every intellectual in its midst." This is one of Dr. Neal Wood's conclusions in his competent, informative, yet rather flat account of Communism's impact on British intellectuals. This breaking-point comes when respect for truth and human dignity reasserts itself; when millennial dreams and fraudulent abstractions are seen for what they are. When this happens the myths woven by the Party bureaucrats (a minority of whom are ex-intellectuals themselves) become patently indecent. The new lines of Mr. R. P. Dutt or Mr. James Klugmann square too uncomfortably with the old: and the intellectual re-enters, through expulsion from the Party or by resignation, the less lunatic world of "bourgeois" fact. For some, as Dr. Wood recalls, the Soviet-Nazi pact was the breaking-point; for others, the Soviet invasion of Finland. Yet others, having swallowed countless earlier atrocities, waited for the Hungarian tragedy of 1956. Even now, four years later, some intellectuals (Professors J. D. Bernal and Thomson, Drs. Cornforth, Dobb, and Arnold Kettle) remain whence all but they have fled—adorning the editorial board of *Marxism Today*, the Communist Party's theoretical journal.

These experiences—which neither Dr. Wood nor myself have ever shared—form a tragic-comic footnote to political history. For the Communist Party has never been a major force in our affairs—and the intellectuals which it recruits have never controlled it. Indeed the number of intellectuals prepared to lie for Stalin was never spectacularly high. Yet they were numerous enough, especially in the '30s and '40s—and Dr. Wood's story is an instructive but repulsive one. He deals in some detail with the more prominent cases—and dissects with special care the allegedly "red decade" of the '30s. Here we have the whole familiar complex—the thin moods of the '20s eroded by Fascism and depression; scholars and scientists thirsting for "action;" an extended seed-bed of nihilism, self-hatred, and mock-heroics; the growing disillusion (underwritten by Harold Laski and the Webbs) with the ethos of liberalism; the symbolic, if temporary, hold of Communism upon a Toynbee, a Spender, and a Strachey.

The sources of this episode are clearly very varied. The intellectual and psychological attraction of Marxism should not be discounted. Many stalwarts of the *Left Book Club* imbibed and purveyed a pseudo-science of society; then, as now, there was a market for fake sociology. They also sought the best of two worlds—an *élite* position in the Party plus an ecstatic union with the "masses." They got the *worst* of both worlds—they never penetrated the Party's *élite*, and the "masses," anyway, were not interested in the Party. But the basic drive was the reaction to Fascism and depression. In other circumstances the nihilism and self-hatred would have found more personal and less political channels.

Dr. Wood pays especial attention to the public school and Oxbridge converts to Stalinism—young people impelled to the Party by liberal consciences or rebellious individualism. These people were really as few as they were conspicuous and they left no lasting mark on our political culture. Nor were they ever ideal Bolshevik material. It is true that several of them became Party overseers—not least Mr. Klugmann, whose varying assessments of Tito are pleasingly recorded by Dr. Wood. Messrs. Burgess and Maclean were of this same generation: they were to go far in the service of the State (and of the Party) before fleeing to Moscow. But the bulk of those with whom Dr. Wood is concerned (at least the non-scientists) were, by Bolshevik standards, cast in a less heroic mould. The consciences which pushed them into the Party led them out again—they never made the Bolshevik grade, requiring as it did a zeal for moral absolutes, a contempt for moral restraints, and an undying scorn for ordinary flesh-and-blood human beings.

The scions of great Liberal houses whose doings Dr. Wood describes were perhaps less important than they believed. It is a pity that, through lack of data or excess of prudence, Dr. Wood did not widen his sample. There were other more significant circles at work—men and women of lower social status in universities other than Oxbridge, and a small, unpublicised, but influential group (including many Continental emigrés) who were *de facto* Russian agents. This latter group did not always work within Party channels. (Many of its members were, for reasons of nationality, ineligible for membership of the British Party.) But it was in close contact with selected Party members in the universities —especially in London. Years later, in 1952, several members of this Comintern group perished in the "Slansky purge" in Prague. I

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remember vividly the dismay this brought to several of their former British contacts, now ageing and padded by respectable jobs.

Dr. Wood also underestimates the "front organisations" which the Party promotes. These bodies are far from negligible. The Association of Scientific Workers, for example, "whose apparatus at least since the beginning of the war has been in the hands of Communists and sympathisers" is now 11,000 strong and its leadership interlocks with that of many other Communist-controlled societies. Yet Dr. Wood seems to feel that "from one standpoint the 'front organisation' performs a definite service for British democracy . . . it tends to prevent the complete estrangement of the Communist from society by providing a point of contact with the non-Communist." This is so general a remark that it may be true—now and again. More continuous is a far greater disservice to democracy—that of trumpeting and legitimising the narrow Party line.

These blemishes do not destroy the merit of Dr. Wood's enquiry. It has, of course, drawn the fire of the *New Left* scholastics, the *Daily Worker*, the Trotskyists, and Mr. A. J. P. Taylor. These authorities all agree that Dr. Wood lacks sympathy with Marxism—several of them abuse the Rockefeller Foundation for supporting him in his impious research. Much of this reaction, in the age of coexistence, is easy to understand. Many people, for excellent reasons, would prefer the subject to be forgotten. What is more—McCarthy's ghost still walks, inhibiting any critical review of Communist strength or Marxist affiliations. Incipient fashions, indeed, make me wonder whether another such book might not be needed twenty years from now. For we may be on the verge of a significant, if limited, revival of "intellectual" Communism. It might seem paradoxical for an "affluent society" to harbour such a revival—and, of course, it smacks of "McCarthyism" even to suggest it! Yet there are straws in the wind too obvious to ignore. Political attitudes are slow to change—but a new universe of discourse and action is already emerging. Central to this new phase are the expansion of Soviet power, the real or reputed changes in Soviet society, and the decline of the Labour Party here at home. Our neo-Marxists (if not the Communist Party itself) already sense the opportunities this phase may provide. How many young men will hedge their bets—more out of opportunism than through nihilism or self-hate? Before they do so, let them browse in the pages of this book. If they mark its lesson, they might preserve Dr. Wood from writing its sequel.

Julius Gould

The End of Militarism

A History of Militarism. By ALFRED VAGTS. *Hollis & Carter.* 42s.

"LOOKING to the future, the curse of the world is European militarism," the American General Tasker Bliss remarked at the end of the First World War. It was a view that was a central part of Wilsonian thinking about the peace settlement; and it survived into the Second World War. "Our own objectives are clear," President Roosevelt said in his message to Congress on January 6th, 1942. "The objective of smashing the militarism imposed by war lords upon their enslaved people. . . ." Professor Vagts was clearly inspired by sentiments of this kind when he set out in the 1930s to try and define this "militarism" which liberals and socialists of all kinds had been consistently denouncing for the past century. But one cannot help feeling that, as he worked, the subject of his study eluded him, and that, instead of being a single entity that could be conveniently attacked and slain, "Militarism" turned out to be the name somewhat misleadingly applied to a number of different complicated historical and social situations. Like many historians who try to write the history of an abstract noun, Professor Vagts finds himself recording a number of concrete particular cases.

At the start of his book he realised the difficulty of the task he had set himself, and he makes a distinction between "militarism" and "the military way." The latter is "marked by a primary concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power with the utmost efficiency." Militarism, on the other hand, is unlimited in its scope: "it may permeate all society and become dominant over all industry and arts. . . . Militarism displays the qualities of caste and cult, authority and belief." The distinction is a valid one; yet it is hard to work out in practice, and, indeed, Dr. Vagts soon tacitly abandons it.

There are only a few societies, and then only for brief periods, which are militaristic in his sense. (The most interesting perhaps is Japan before and during the Second World War, which fulfils nearly all Professor Vagts' criteria, and which he might have made more of.) Even the most often quoted example of "militarism," Prussia, was never wholly a military state. It was certainly a society which displayed the qualities of caste; its traditions were certainly the object of cult, especially among those who did not feel themselves to belong to the military caste. Yet Prussian militarism never became "dominant over all industry and arts;" and the cult of an efficient civilian bureaucracy was as

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strong an element in the Prussian tradition as the cult of the Army. The drama of German history lies not only in the relations between the Army and the State in Prussia, but in the interaction between the old Prussian military caste and the new industrialists.

> It will be difficult for future writers of German history to understand [Walter Rathenau once wrote] how in our time two class systems could penetrate each other; the first is a survival of the feudal system, the second the capitalist class system.... But it will strike him as even odder that the newly arisen capitalist order had first to contribute to the strengthening of the feudal order.

An interpretation of Prussian and German history and society in terms of the conflict of class and the clash of economic interests makes more sense than an attempt to explain it in terms of "militarism" alone.

However, even if Dr. Vagts does not succeed in isolating "militarism" as an entity or in wholly carrying through his initial distinction, his book contains a great deal of interesting miscellaneous information for anyone willing to persevere through its ill-printed and cumbrously written pages. (Perhaps, however, now that German-American has become a standard academic dialect, we should stop complaining and accept it as such.) More important, this book also raises a number of crucial questions about the effect on society of war and preparation for war. Professor Vagts had finished his book before the Second World War, and he has firmly refused to make any major changes in it, or to speculate about contemporary problems of military-civilian relations. He realised that the totalitarian systems of our time, however much they may depend on traditional military qualities of discipline and obedience, and however concerned they may be with the preparation for war, are deeply different from the "militaristic" societies of the past, and in many ways opposed to them. In Russia, Stalin was determined to insist on civil control over the army, and the purge of military leaders was a typical feature of his régime. In Germany it was members of the Prussian military caste who provided the only serious, if belated, resistance to Hitler. And to-day in many parts of the world it is the traditional military figures who often seem to offer the only safeguard of civilian, non-military values. In France, General de Gaulle came to power, with the support of much of the Left, as the last hope for democratic constitutional liberties. In Pakistan, Turkey and elsewhere, it is the army that claims to be saving the country from oppression and corruption; and in some cases, at least, it is as good as its word.

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These developments are only possible because the traditional role of the army—that of fighting foreign wars—hardly exists any longer. Armies can still be used for repressing disorder at home; they can still be used for fighting colonial wars, and, indeed, it is only the latter that still provide an opportunity for traditional "militarism," as French experience in Indo-China and Algeria shows. In general, however, as far as the Great Powers are concerned, nuclear strategy and the threat of world-annihilation have produced a situation in which "war is too serious a matter to be left to generals." Dr. Vagts has an interesting section on the gradual acceptance by the generals, often reluctantly, of new and ever more devastating methods of warfare. When, as a French officer put it before the First World War, "the immediate object of fighting is to kill, and to go on killing until there is nothing left to kill," then there is no front line any more, no distinction between soldier and civilian. This was already demonstrated in the Second World War, when the civilians in the cities often suffered more than the armed forces; and with this change of emphasis much of the moral ascendancy of the fighting man vanished. In the next war the role of the professional may well be over in the four minutes between the warning and the explosion.

THE DANGERS OF "MILITARISM" are less acute the greater the dangers of war. The initial decision to launch a nuclear attack is more disastrous and irrevocable than the measures of mobilisation and troop-movements which are the prelude to traditional wars. It must therefore be a political decision and can only be taken by the political leaders in the U.S.A. or in Russia—though presumably it will not be long before de Gaulle is also in a position to decide. (As the British political leaders of both parties are unable to make up their minds what sort of weapons they want, they may be fortunate enough to avoid the responsibility for war.) This, in turn, has led to an extreme sensitivity among the American public and, still more, among America's allies, about the control of the fateful decision. The result has been the curious spectacle of a nation asking to be reassured that the President knows about the flight of every reconnaissance plane, and of a government uncertain whether to lie about its espionage activities or whether to produce an elaborate and priggish moral justification of them.

"Armies exist to serve the policies of states," de Gaulle has laid down. It is in fact rarely that states have existed to serve the policies of armies, as Professor Vagts' definition seems to imply. The danger has rather been that military decisions are taken which have political consequences that are unforeseen or unintended. The Schlieffen plan, for example, by requiring the passage of a German army through Belgium, was bound to bring England into the First World War against Germany. The Russian General Staff in 1914, by arranging their mobilisation in such a way that it had to occur simultaneously on the German and Austrian frontiers of Russia, removed the last chance of localising the war. General Gamelin, by planning for a wholly defensive war, obliged the French government to betray their allies in Eastern Europe. Such political consequences follow when governments do not have a clear enough policy and when they are uncertain about the objectives which they want their military advisers to secure, so that the professionals are left to "get on with it" without direction.

WARS OCCUR EITHER BECAUSE, like the Second World War, they were deliberately planned, or because, as in the case of the First World War, governments are confused about the aims and the consequences of their actions. It may be that, as we are still often assured, the Russians are deliberately planning the Third World War, in which case there is little we can do about it, since they must know the cost and the consequences already. It might even be, though the evidence seems against it, that the Americans are preparing a "preventive war," as the Russians believe. There is, however, more danger of a war starting by accident than by design, the result of a lack of political direction or even, it may be, of a mechanical flaw or psychological lapse. And if the Third and Last War starts by mistake we may well regret that the technologist and the machine have replaced the humane, intelligent and even gentlemanly, militarists of Dr. Vagts' pages.

James Joll

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LETTERS

"Palestine Regained"

I DREAD to think what a few more "agonising reappraisals" by Mr. Crossman of his attitude towards the Palestine question will produce in the way of increased misrepresentation of the Arab case and the facts of history. For if Mr. Crossman did go through any spiritual agony in this matter, he certainly suffered to no purpose, seeing that he came out by the same door as in he went, except for learning something of the Zionist technique of ignoring or distorting unpalatable facts.

In his article "Palestine Regained" (a distortion is already present in the title) in your July issue, Mr. Crossman argues that Arab opposition to the Jewish National Home, and even Arab nationalism in general, came after and not before the Balfour Declaration; and that even in the 1920's Britain might have been able to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine had there been "a Government in Westminster conscious of its Imperial destiny"—a somewhat extraordinary phrase to issue from Mr. Crossman's socialist pen! In expressing this conclusion Mr. Crossman astonishingly ignores: (1) that when Herzl tried to "sell" the National Home to Sultan Abdul Hamid in the 1890's, or rather to buy it from him (for he offered Jewish financial help to a bankrupt Ottoman Empire in return), even that notorious monarch, who was not noted for excessive love of his Arab subjects, adamantly refused to allow large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine, conveying to Herzl the following message: "I cannot alienate a single square foot of land, for it is not mine but my people's; let the Jews keep their millions. If my Empire is dismembered they will perhaps receive Palestine gratis. But it must be our corpse that they cut up; I cannot agree to vivisection;" (2) that the opposition of the Palestine Arabs to the growth of Jewish settlements in Palestine was becoming active before 1914—the national opposition of a people to foreign settlements in their land even before the settlers claimed statehood and provoked political resistance; (3) that Arab nationalism as a political movement started long before 1914 and that in 1916 (a year before the Balfour Declaration) the leaders of the Arab nationalists had concluded an agreement with Britain whereby they undertook to revolt against Turkey and help in the British campaign in Palestine in return for a promise of independence in a territory which, on any honest reading of the text, included Palestine, as the Arabs certainly thought it did; (4) that Allenby's proclamation to the people of Palestine published in Jerusalem towards the end of 1917 (after the Balfour Declaration) contained no official reference to the Jewish National Home and that the Declaration was not published or even alluded to in any public function in Palestine during the whole of 1918 and 1919—obviously because the British Government knew all along, contrary to Mr. Crossman's assertion, that the Declaration would incur Arab hostility; (5) that as soon as the Arabs knew of the Balfour Declaration their leaders were alarmed, protested, sought assurances from the British Government that the rights of the Arab people of Palestine (nearly 90 per cent of the country's total population) would not be molested, and were given such assurances, which temporarily deceived some of the Arab leaders but did not allay the fears of the Palestine Arabs; (6) that the late Dr. Weizmann speaking on April 27th, 1918, tried to allay these fears by saying "all fears expressed openly or secretly by the Arabs that they are to be ousted from their present position are due either to a fundamental misconception of Zionist aims or to the malicious misrepresentations of our common enemies;" (7) that when the American King-Crane Commission visited Palestine and Syria during the sitting of the Peace Conference in 1918 to ascertain the wishes of the people, it reported that "Anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted. No British officer consulted by the Commissioners believed that the Zionist programme could be carried out except by force of arms . . . that of itself is evidence of a strong sense of injustice of the Zionist programme on the part of the non-Jewish population in Palestine. Decisions requiring armies to carry out are sometimes necessary but they are surely not gratuitously to be taken in the interests of injustice;" (8) the first serious Arab riots in Palestine against Zionism took place in 1921 and the Haycraft Commission sent by the British Government to investigate the causes reported that "the leaders of Arab opinion not only make no secret of what they think, but they carry on a political campaign. In this campaign, however, the people participate with the leaders because they feel that their political and national interests are identical."

So much for Mr. Crossman's major fallacy. But there are many others which cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged: (1) his uncritical acceptance of the Zionist conception of a "return" to Palestine by immigrant Jews largely unrelated to the Hebrew population of Biblical times, 2,000 years after a Jewish state had ceased to exist in Palestine and 1,300 years after the country had become Arab in every sense of the word; (2) his equally uncritical acceptance of the Zionist argument that to have denied the Jews statehood in Palestine in the 20th century would have been a greater injustice than forcing a Jewish state on the natural and lawful owners of the country and dispossessing them of it; (3) his implied representation of the Arabs as "aborigines," the conquest of whose country would have been accepted a few decades earlier as justified in the interests of civilisation; (4) his interpretation of the pro-Arab attitude of the majority of the British administrators in Palestine—an interpretation which completely ignores the possibility that this attitude may have been born of an outraged sense of justice and moral disapproval of what the British Government (albeit not as fully conscious of its "Imperial destiny" as Mr. Crossman may have wished) was ordering them to do in Palestine. In

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any case the attitude of the British administrators on the spot availed the Arabs naught against the policy of Whitehall. It was as impotent as the sympathy of the warders in a prison with a person wrongfully condemned by the State and eventually executed.

EDWARD ATIYAH

Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, London

MR. R. H. S. CROSSMAN, in his article "Palestine Regained" in your July issue, makes some references to parallels between the Irish Revolution and contemporary Colonial Revolutions. Some of these parallels are of considerable interest. It is all the more unfortunate that Mr. Crossman should preface them by a misleading and emotional description of the Irish Revolution itself in the following words:

> *The classic pattern for Colonial Revolution was established ironically enough, by a European people, the Irish. The first of the terrorists, partisans, or leaders of resistance—whichever you like to call it—was Mr. de Valera. In many previous wars civilians had resisted uniformed armies, but no one had glorified them as guerrillas and revolutionaries. World opinion still regarded war as a matter for professionals. De Valera got rid of the British by encouraging Irish civilians to shoot British soldiers in the back and to burn them alive in the houses where they were sleeping. He won, because world public opinion was more shocked by British oppression than it was by Irish atrocities.*

At the present time, when there are many reasons to hope that Anglo-Irish relations may be entering into a new and happier phase, it is regrettable that any responsible English writer should use language of this kind, very reminiscent—to Irish readers—of the language used by the most jingo section of the popular British press in the period 1919–21. It is quite understandable that such language should have been used at that time. The reason for using it now is not so clear.

Mr. Crossman, who writes as if Mr. de Valera had been an irresponsible terrorist leader, ignores the historical fact that the majority of the democratically elected representatives of the Irish people seceded from the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1919, declared the independence of Ireland, summoned British troops to withdraw and, on their refusing to do so, adopted a policy of armed conflict. The "Irish Civilians," of whom Mr. Crossman speaks, were soldiers carrying out the mandate of what the great majority of the Irish people regarded as the Irish Parliament. They had behind them, therefore, a moral force uncontestable by any democrat: as great a moral force as any soldiers anywhere had ever had. The methods used were the customary methods of guerilla fighting. Nor, of course, is it true to say, as Mr. Crossman does, that "in many previous wars civilians had resisted uniformed armies but no one had glorified them as guerillas and revolutionaries." The very word "guerilla" reminds us of the Spanish partisans in the Peninsular wars who have in fact been rightly glorified as heroes both in Spanish and British

Privileged Opinions

I don't want to be optimistic, but I think it is clear that British understanding of America has been making some good progress of late. As recently as the 1930's, Englishmen who understood American life and literature were a good deal rarer than those who could describe, say, the civilisation of ancient Egypt.

The war-time influx of G.I.s gave some illumination, but war-time conditions are never suitable for quiet thinking, and the real work has been done by fifteen years of dollar-exchanged visits and travel scholarships. Now that so many thousands of Englishmen have travelled and studied in America, we have enough material for an understanding; the problem is to put that material into some sort of order.

"The American Imagination" is a collection of essays contributed to a special number of The Times Literary Supplement last winter.... The book is a capable and useful co-ordinating job. It isn't perfect, of course: there are some gaps (e.g. no article on American literary criticism) and some essays that fall too far below the general standard (the incredible piece on advertising, for instance, with its conclusion that "The imagination which has gone into the creation of advertising is well employed"). Neither is it free from modishness, the Original Sin of smart metropolitan journalism. Nevertheless, the essential clues, and much of the essential information, are here.... If you want to begin thinking seriously about American civilisation, this book could be your starting-point. Not that it has escaped, or will escape, vigorous criticism. Already the attack has been sounded by the ebullient Mr. Leslie Fiedler, of Montana University, in the March issue of ENCOUNTER*—an Anglo-American magazine that would itself have been an impossibility in the thirties. Mr. Fiedler is a critic I never miss reading.... He begins with the routine American grumble about The Times Literary Supplement—T.L.S. writers are snobbish mandarins, they encourage their readers to undervalue American scholarship, etc., etc.*

Frankly, I am getting a little tired of hearing about how the T.L.S. hurts American feelings. Why don't they stop reading it, if it hurts so much?... As for protests, the best and most telling have in any case come, as they should come, from our side. Did Mr. Fiedler not read Mr. Frank Kermode's remarks on what he called "that band of lawless anonyms who air their privileged opinions weekly in the T.L.S.?" Evidently not.... This waste of adrenalin is a pity, because Mr. Fiedler does have some good things to say (his account of the morality behind rigged T.V. Quiz shows is excellent), and can help, in certain ways, to straighten out distortions.

JOHN WAIN, in THE OBSERVER (17 *July*)

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tradition. It is not true, as Mr. Crossman implies, that the Irish habitually and by preference shot British troops in the back, nor did Mr. de Valera or anyone else encourage Irish civilians or soldiers to burn British soldiers alive in the houses where they were sleeping. It is true that the war, like all wars, was cruel. As is usual in guerilla wars, the occupying forces, being unable to deal effectively with their elusive enemy, took reprisals against the civilian population indiscriminately and against prisoners. This policy, in Ireland, was carried out mainly by the Black and Tans and among the most notorious examples of such excesses were the murders of the Mayors of Cork and Limerick and the burning of Cork City by the Black and Tans.

It would be easy to make a more extended reply but it serves no useful purpose, either for Britain or Ireland, to polemicise on these matters now. I hope that Mr. Crossman, on reflection, will be of the same opinion.

V. IREMONGER
Counsellor

Irish Embassy,
London

. . . and a Reply

I AM grateful to the authors of these letters. Taken together, they illustrate very characteristically the pitfalls in the path of anyone who tries to make an independent reappraisal of the Palestine problem.

First, Mr. Iremonger. Although I should have known better, the arrival of a semi-official protest from the Eire Embassy in London came as a surprise. Quite wrongly, I had assumed that Irishmen would not be displeased by my description of their revolution as "the classic pattern for colonial revolutions." But no. Though Mr. Iremonger admits that the war waged against the British oppressor was cruel, he rebukes me on the ground that I write "as if Mr. de Valera had been an irresponsible terrorist leader." It is strange that an Eire diplomat should fail to have observed how every revolutionary leader is dubbed "an irresponsible terrorist"—until he has overthrown the established order imposed by the foreign power against which he is fighting. But I must not blame Mr. Iremonger, for I have failed to realise an equally obvious truth. Once independence has been achieved, the "irresponsible terrorist" normally becomes part of a new national Establishment and feels embarrassed by his own irresponsible past. But, despite Mr. Iremonger, I shall continue to believe that, if Mr. de Valera himself were to read my article, he would not only accept its analysis but appreciate its irony.

Finally, I can only tell Mr. Atiyah that I was not unaware of those planks in the Arab platform which he selects for hurling at me all over again. I too have read *The Arab Awakening* and learnt from this wonderful book that there was an Arab élite in 1914 who dreamt of liberating their people and giving them independence in a united Arab republic. But their influence was negligible; and I am surely right in stating that Arab nationalism became a mass movement only after 1917.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

London

Censorship

I HAVE now left the Censorship Board to take up the post mentioned by Mr. Derek Hill in his article in your July issue and for the "base" motive he was good enough to impute to me. (Incidentally the British Film Producers' Association cannot have formed too low an opinion of my work in the censorship field to have entrusted me with the entire direction of their affairs!)

It is therefore inappropriate for me to reply in any detail to Mr. Hill's article and I understand that this has in any event been capably done by my successor, Mr. Trevelyan.

I may, however, be allowed perhaps to mention two points.

1. Mr. Hill states that two out of four films, *La Ronde, Le Plaisir, Gervaise*, and *Baby Doll*, were in fact cut, despite assurances that *"X"* films would, wherever possible, be left free of censorship. *La Ronde* and *Baby Doll* were, of course, uncut (hardly suggesting an illiberal censorship with a 1913 attitude), *Gervaise* suffered one cut only in one scene—but which is the other film alleged to have been cut? *Le Plaisir*? Here are the facts. The film *was cut* by the distributors for showing at the Edinburgh Film Festival (where the Board's Certificate is not required), because they thought that certain scenes might be unacceptable to the public. When the film was subsequently submitted to the Board for censorship, the Board made it *a condition of the issue of their Certificate* that all the cuts which had been made should be reinstated.

2. Mr. Hill, referring to the Board's opposition to a projected film based on Michael Croft's novel, *Spare the Rod* (an opposition that never at any time existed, we only stipulated an *"X"* Certificate), quotes in detail comments made by me personally to Michael Croft, defending the Board's action. Not only did I not make the comments quoted, but I have never had the pleasure of meeting or speaking to Mr. Croft.

May I leave your readers to assess from the above two illustrations the general reliability of the remainder of Mr. Hill's article?

ARTHUR WATKINS

London

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Peter Willmott and **Michael Young** are well-known English sociologists associated with the Institute of Community Studies....

Hans Meyerhoff is Professor of Philosophy at the University of California.... **Julius Gould** is on the Faculty of the London School of Economics.... **James Joll** is a member of St. Anthony's College, Oxford.

Henry Popkin writes us about his contribution on "The Anglo-Jewish Writer" which we published in the May ENCOUNTER: "My more proper identification is that I am at present Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. In the United States, I teach in the English department of New York University."

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